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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

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contents

GEORGE STEINER	Walter Benjamin-Gershom Scholem Briefwechsel 1933-1940	
DICK DAVIS	Fraulein X (poem)	725
ROBERT BLAKE	Max Egremont: Balfour—A Life of Arthur James Balfour	726
	Fiction	
DAVID HAWKES	Ch'ien Chung-Shu: Fortress Besieged	
C. J. DUNN	Peter Judd Arnesen: The Medieval Japanese Daimyo	728
	Fiction	
VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM	John Cowper Powys: After my Fashion	
JEREMY TREGLOWN	Samuel Beckett: Company	728
A. J. KRAILSHEIMER	Derek A. Watts: Cardinal de Retz—The Ambiguities of a Seventeenth-century mind	730
ERIC HOBSBAWM	Alan Block: East Side-West Side—Organizing Crime in New York 1930-1950	
CRAIG BROWN	Dory Previn: Bog-Trotter—An autobiography with lyrics	731
MICHEL JOBERT	Philip G. Cerny: The Politics of Grandeur—Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy	
DENNIS DUNCANSON	William Darryl Henderson: Why the Vietcong Fought—A Study of Motivation and Control in a Modern Army in Combat	732
ANITA BROOKNER	Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale: Misia—The Life of Misia Sert	733
BERNARD WASSERSTEIN	Peter and Leni Gillman: "Collar the Lot!"—How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees	
VERNON SCANNELL	Philip Oakes: Middle England—A Memory of the Thirties	734
	Commentary	
J. M. RICHARDS	A Revolution in London Housing (Heinz Gallery)	
ANDREW HISLOP	Courage Fuyons (Curzon)	
VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM	George Eliot in Westminster Abbey	
JOHN SUTHERLAND	A Short Sharp Shock (Theatre Royal, Stratford East)	
PETER KEATING	The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby (Aldwych)	733-3
	To the Editor	
	Among this week's contributors	
	Author, Author	734
DAVID DAICHES	Thomas Crawford: Society and the Lyric	
ANTHONY BURGESS	Roger Elbourne: Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840	735
AARON WILDAVSKY	Michael Thompson: Rubbish Theory—The Creation and Destruction of Value	
VIRGINIA SAPIRO	Susan Estabrook Kennedy: If All We Did Was to Weep at Home—A History of White Working Class Women in America	
	Leslie Woodcock Tentler: Wage-Earning Women—Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States	736
STEPHEN STICH	Christopher Peacocke: Holistic Explanation—Action, Space, Interpretation	737
COLIN McGINN	Michael E. Levin: Metaphysics and the Mind-Body Problem	
L. JONATHAN COHEN	D. H. Mellor (Editor): Science, Belief and Behaviour	
MICHAEL HOFMANN	In Connemara (poem)	738
A. A. LONG	Malcolm Schofield, Myles Burnyeat and Jonathan Barnes (Editors): Doubt and Dogmatism	
JULIA ANNAS	Jonathan Lear: Aristotle and Logical Theory	739
ROBERT BIRLEY	Richard William Pfaff: Montague Rhodes James	
E. S. TURNER	Merlin Waterson: The Servants' Hall—A Domestic History of Erddig	740
ANDREW SINCLAIR	John Carl Miller (Editor): Poe's Helen Remembers	
DAVID SEED	Nicola Bradbury: Henry James—The Later Novels	741
GAMINI SALGADO	John Ripley: "Julius Caesar" on stage in England and America 1599-1973	
PETER HOLLAND	Judith Milhous: Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields 1695-1708	742
	Fiction	
CRAIG BROWN	Barry Fantoni: Mike Dime	
	Constantine FitzGibbon: The Rat Report	
ELISSA DURWOOD	Evelyn Wilde Mayerson: Sanjo	
MARY FURNESS	Lynn Guest: Children of Hachiman	743

Fifty years on . . .

In the TLS of June 26, 1930, E. Mavrogordato reviewed two books on cricket, one by A. P. F. Chapman, D. R. Jardine and others, the other by Neville Cardus:

The purpose and spirit of the first is summed up in the foreword of Mr. Eric Parker, who has set himself to obtain from his contributors "advice fitting modern ways".

Its subject, then, is these modern ways. There is not much in it about the past, and so little to suggest that there were giants in those days that in the index the entry "Gloves, batting" is followed by "Grip on the bat". And "Grace, W. G."? He is mentioned once or twice in the text, but as much as a warning as an example. Indeed, to an editor who holds that "simplicity and straightforwardness are the genius of the game" so closely identified with him, W. G. must be something of an embarrassment for his most conspicuous appearance in his pages is as protagonist in an undistinguished story.

What makes this book valuable is that the writers have put the past aside. They use all their space to discuss the methods of today—to explain what they are and why they have been adopted. . . .

Mr. H. C. White (head groundsman to the M.C.C.) deals with the care of grounds, showing himself to be also one of the moderns in his preoccupation with worms and weeds and manure. Mr. H. D. G. Leveson-Gower says a kind word for umpires, Mr. A. P. F. Chapman writes of fielding as if it were the best fun of all—and so would anyone with those prehensile hands. A gruesome X-ray picture of the battered fingers of Harry Butt is among the encouragements offered by Mr. W. W. Franklin to budding wicket-keepers. To see against that there is evidence in facsimiles of score sheets neatly written by Mr. H. Strudwick, that a wicket-keeper may keep his fingers supple.

Of the many appeals made by cricket to Mr. Cardus the chief is to his sense of beauty; and by discussing what is so intimately associated with English fields and skies he is happily inspired to give his first pages to its lovely setting:—

Cricket, all know and love it, is to show that it does so . . . part of the holiday time which is the Englishman's heritage . . . playtime in a homely country side. It is a game that seems to me to take on the very colours of the passing months. In the spring cricketers are fresh and eager; ambition within them breaks into bud; new bats and flannels are as chaste as the April winds. The showers of May drive the players from the field, but soon they are back again, and every blade of grass around them is a jewel to the light.

That is one aspect of the game as a national heritage. Another aspect on which he dwells is that it is a game played by Englishmen of all classes—by street urchins with a lamp-post for wicket, by the boys of the public schools, by parson and blacksmith on the village green, as well as by those great, wise and eminent personages whose deliberate craftsmanship is a public spectacle. One would expect a game that is popular with all men to offer scope for the expression of varied individualities. Mr. Cardus delights

A friendship and its flaws

By George Steiner

Walter Benjamin-Gershom Scholem Briefwechsel 1933-1940
Herausgegeben von Gershom Scholem
320pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
3 518 02122 2

This must be one of the saddest books in the world. It tells of an intimate friendship between two masters of the spirit and of language; but of a friendship flawed, even in its subtlest motions of mutual trust and mutual need, by misunderstanding, by subterranean intimations of jealousy, by irremediable frictions of sensibility. It tells of uncanny political clairvoyance (Scholem's), but of a clairvoyance which, like Cassandra's, is offered in vain and turns, therefore, to ironic desolation. It tells of the equivocations of thought and of ideology which lured Walter Benjamin's high gifts, which reduction imposed with every year, soon leading to a full-fledged university chair and widening international echo, and whereas Palestine was on its arduous way to becoming Israel, Benjamin's course led from disaster to disaster, from brief mirages of hope to the reality of ruin and suicide. In these letters we can follow every step of this descent.

A first and crucial disclosure is this: contrary to popular myth, it was not Gershom Scholem who was anxiously labouring to bring a recalcitrant Walter Benjamin to safe haven in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. The dialectic of impulse and withdrawal is far more intricate. Each time one of the two protagonists seems decided upon Benjamin's emigration or even visit, the other flinches away. At at least three crucial junctures, Scholem puts almost insuperable objections in the way of his friend's coming. There are the fierce Palestine troubles after 1936; there is a long spell of inhibition attending on the break-up of Scholem's first marriage; above all, there is Scholem's instinct, urged with pained but none the less drastic candour, that nothing in the climate of feeling and professional opportunities prevalent in Palestine would accord with Benjamin's needs and wants. No one, argues Scholem, will understand what Benjamin is talking about. Marginal posts, such as librarianships, are already massively oversubscribed. A man who is not really prepared to commit himself to the Hebrew language will be even more of an exile than he already is in Paris and Ibiza. Whatever his own hesitations, Benjamin undoubtedly sensed the force of Scholem's doubts and let pass what might have been the last chance to save his own life.

The second thread of conflict which runs through these letters and broadens into tragedy is the notorious problem of Walter Benjamin's Marxism. Scholem abhorred anything and everything to do with an ideology to which he had lost his brother (soon to be done to death by the Gestapo) and in which he saw, especially for Jews, a suicidal aberration. Anyone who had sold his soul to the Moscow devils, either avowedly like Brecht or, at some hermetic level of methodology and idiom, such as Adorno and the Frankfurt School, merely elicited Scholem's sarcasm or impatient indifference. Here lay mass-enslavement and confusion of spirit scarcely better than Hitlerism.

Benjamin's position was, of course, infinitely more complex. He saw in Brecht not only an artist of genius, but a host in exile. He believed that the KPD might, for some time at least, prove the only effective organ of resistance against the brownshirts. More importantly, Walter Benjamin drew selectively, hermetically, but nevertheless richly on the sociology of Marxism, on the Marxist theory of history, when trying to hammer out his own uniquely penetrative reading of the relations between art and society, notably in nineteenth-century France. But in so doing, he soon found himself in a grotesquely false situation. In order to secure a modicum of financial and psychological support from the Frankfurt-Geneva-New York Institute for Social Studies, he had to exaggerate, often crudely, the extent of his historicism and to conceal the singular hermeneutic, the almost "mystical" and autonomous concept of time and of art, with which he was grappling. In fact, this attempt at exaggeration failed, and Benjamin's work soon fell victim to a celebrated critique by Adorno and to Horkheimer's scarcely-concealed mistrust. At the other end of the stick, Benjamin had to try and keep from Scholem the personal and methodological extent of his involvement with Marxism and German communism (in which his brother also, as it happened, played a ranking role).

But equivocation would not do. Scholem pressed sharply for an answer. The exchanges of April-May 1934 and of November 1937 edged the whole relationship towards disaster. And such was Scholem's exasperation at Benjamin's involvement in what seemed to him to be the shoddy naiveties of dialectical materialism, that he was blind to some of the finest things in Benjamin's late work—notably the seminal paper on "Art in an Age of Technical Reproducibility". This book is full of pages almost unbearable to read; none more so than the letters in which Benjamin pleads with Scholem for some kind of fair-minded response to essays which, he knows, Scholem will not like but which, he also knows, are of eminent value. Such response is withheld or made in the brusque guise of "I am not competent on such matters, I really have no time to read the various gentlemen whom you mention" (this, most pointedly, in respect of Adorno who, as Scholem grudgingly came to admit, was Benjamin's first disciple).

Against this sombre choreography essential aspects of the Jewish personality and of its possible future with knowledge and use of the language. To Walter Benjamin, Hebrew was an inspired tongue, close, one might conjecture, to those Adamic fonts and unisons of all human discourse on which he meditated in his unequalled essay on translation—but a tongue to be wondered at, to be glimpsed as the play of letters of "white fire on a black background", rather than to be methodically acquired, let alone used in one's writings.

By 1932-33, these differences of perspective had taken on a grim edge. Benjamin's economic position as a freelance writer with intensely esoteric leanings had always been precarious. With the Nazi rise to power, he found himself a penniless refugee. Scholem's situation was also not an easy one. The study of Jewish mysticism had yet to achieve magisterial status and circumstances in Palestine were static. But whereas Scholem's confrontation of each year, soon leading to a full-fledged university chair and widening international echo, and whereas Palestine was on its arduous way to becoming Israel, Benjamin's course led from disaster to disaster, from brief mirages of hope to the reality of ruin and suicide. In these letters we can follow every step of this descent.

A first and crucial disclosure is this: contrary to popular myth, it was not Gershom Scholem who was anxiously labouring to bring a recalcitrant Walter Benjamin to safe haven in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv. The dialectic of impulse and withdrawal is far more intricate. Each time one of the two protagonists seems decided upon Benjamin's emigration or even visit, the other flinches away. At at least three crucial junctures, Scholem puts almost insuperable objections in the way of his friend's coming. There are the fierce Palestine troubles after 1936; there is a long spell of inhibition attending on the break-up of Scholem's first marriage; above all, there is Scholem's instinct, urged with pained but none the less drastic candour, that nothing in the climate of feeling and professional opportunities prevalent in Palestine would accord with Benjamin's needs and wants. No one, argues Scholem, will understand what Benjamin is talking about. Marginal posts, such as librarianships, are already massively oversubscribed. A man who is not really prepared to commit himself to the Hebrew language will be even more of an exile than he already is in Paris and Ibiza. Whatever his own hesitations, Benjamin undoubtedly sensed the force of Scholem's doubts and let pass what might have been the last chance to save his own life.

The second thread of conflict which runs through these letters and broadens into tragedy is the notorious problem of Walter Benjamin's Marxism. Scholem abhorred anything and everything to do with an ideology to which he had lost

of approach and retreat, which shadowed even their last meeting in Paris in 1938, one must set the splendour of certain motifs lived and argued in unison. It is a simple fact that the exploration of, the discussion about Kafka, as we can listen to it from letter to letter, is one of the supreme acts of literary-moral intelligence and response in modern times. Nothing else written on Kafka comes up to the same level of exact scruple and brilliance of definition. Scholem's reading is often irritable: he admires Kafka deeply but knows that Kafka is drawing on pseudo-Kabbalistic themes and on Judaic archetypes without having mastered their original content and without having, as it were, made a frank deposit into the bank of belief. There is a sense in which Scholem sees in this ambiguity a necessary condition of an art which, whatever its aura of transcendent intimation, is secular. Benjamin's Kafka is an eternally defeated spirit whose actual "defeatedness" brings him closer to inaccessible revelation than any other naval dreamer has ever been, out of which constant "near miss" springs the final secret of Kafka's desperate gaiety (*Heiterkeit*). Benjamin sees in Kafka's Judaica and Kabbalism the "infirmity of tradition", the necessary collapse of tradition into metaphor. Scholem sees the superficial adoption of this tradition by one who was unwilling to invest in its authentic vitality. These differences of valuation within the shared strength of a passionate admiration make for a marvellous exchange. Benjamin's long letter of June 12, 1938, in which he analyses Kafka both in the light of a passage from Eddington on the "incompressible" physicality of the world and in the light of the paintings of Klee, is unsurpassed in modern literary criticism—or, rather, in that much more demanding exercise of total reading. It alone would make this volume indispensable.

One's gratitude to Gershom Scholem for this publication—copies of his letters to Benjamin were restored to him by the East German state archive in November 1977, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday—is manifest. This correspondence now constitutes the third volume in a classic trilogy of spiritual and historical encounter. At the same time, one is unavoidably disturbed by the unforgiving, coldly transparent air which seems to blow through the entire editorial commentary. Scholem cannot forgive. He has not forgiven those innumerable German Jews who remained blind to their own fate, who returned to Nazi Germany from abroad as late as 1938. No Marxist-influenced scholar, the late Lucien Goldmann for example, escapes contemptuous dismissal. Fools are harried beyond the grave. But a comparable chill touches even on Benjamin. When the latter observes that he is now living in a single room in some marginal quarter of Paris, Scholem remarks in a footnote that it was a "very spacious" room.

Indeed one touches here on the most painful aspect of this aching book. Benjamin's destitution during the years of this correspondence came near to catastrophe. There was, at moments, not money enough to mend a pair of shoes, to buy cigarettes unguardedly. The letters are naked on this point. "Why did I not draw the obvious consequence—i.e. why did I not send him money?" asks Scholem in the lapidary foreword. "I can answer this question, but I do not wish to answer it." Rumours have it that what lies behind these numbing words is some earlier episode in which Walter Benjamin had received direct assistance and gambled it away. It would be impertinent to speculate further. But the murmured negation of the passage haunts one. Scholem is that rare being: an ecstatic rigorist, a man possessed by the merciless authority of the truth and of moral absolutes. Benjamin's humanity ran deep and vulnerable. In the friendship of the two masters, Kafka's very nearly indecipherable parable of the "*Zweikampf*", of the duel of wrestling match, is exemplified. As is the perennial election to pain and to self-inflicted pain which is the condition of the Jew.

Fräulein X

"And it turned out that with her thanks for the poison Fräulein X had still one more request: would the friend sing Brahms' *Vier ernste Gesänge* before they parted."
(Diary of Reck-Malleczewen, December, 1938.)

Unseen, preserved beneath dark velvet, lie
Pale water-colours fugitive to light—
Displayed to none but friendship's gentler eye,
The sanctuaries of her sequestered sight—

Views of the Rhine and of the Holy Land,
Deep vistas of the spirit's need and rest:
Frail on glass shelves Venetian glasses stand,
The keep-sakes of a life secure and blessed.

Now, in this last desire, she redeclares
Old faith in what is hers—Judaic psalms,
The German tongue: that heritage she shares
—Immutably—with Luther and with Brahms:

And though that sheltered world her childhood knew
Is shrunk to a dark room, though in the street
The mob bays hatred to the German Jew,
This covenant survives, beyond defeat.

Dick Davis

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Cool, courteous and conservative

By Robert Blake

MAX EGREMONT:
Balfour
A Life of Arthur James Balfour
391pp. Collins. £12.95.
0 00 216043 9

In March 1887, Arthur Balfour was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. This post, though a graveyard for political reputations, made him. He was lucky: if he had not been the nephew of the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, he would long before have been relegated to the limbo of promising young men whose promise shrivels away in the early morning sun. For two years after entering Parliament in 1875 for the borough of Hertford—which was likely though not absolutely certain to accept Lord Salisbury's nominee—he was silent. His maiden speech was on Indian silver currency, a subject chosen, according to his biographer, "for its capacity to attract neither interest or audience". His role in the Fourth Party in the early 1880s was equivocal. He supported it in so far as it was a lever against Sir Stafford Northcote, but had no intention of seeing his apparently close friend, Lord Randolph Churchill, pushing out Salisbury too. In January 1884, he advised his uncle secretly on tactics: "We should avoid all rows till Randolph is put entirely and flagrantly in the wrong by some act of party disloyalty which everybody can understand and nobody deny". Less than three years later this was exactly what happened.

When Salisbury took office in 1885 he made his nephew president of the Local Government Board, a non-Cabinet post. Balfour was an undeniable flop and Joseph Chamberlain made rings round him; Salisbury was soon out, but the Home Rule crisis brought him back in the summer of 1886, when Balfour to his surprise was offered the recently created post of Scottish Secretary. A land war was raging in the Highlands similar to that in Ireland. The Liberals had been reluctant to use force in a part of Britain which normally supported them. Balfour felt no such inhibitions. It is sometimes forgotten that the steely element in his nature was first displayed not in dealing with papist Irishmen whom he could be expected to dislike but with Presbyterian compatriots. The uproar about the use of the marines in Tiree and the ensuing arrests and jail sentences left him unmoved. His demand for increased powers was accepted.

In November he entered the Cabinet. Lord Salisbury knew what he was about when he moved his nephew four months later to the hottest seat of all, replacing Hicks Beach, whose sight was failing. The Irish Nationalists were, however, delighted—though not for long. T. P. O'Connor described his demeanour as that of "a mere than usually mild member of the mild race of curates". Another Parnellite observed: "We have killed Foster, blinded Beach and smashed up Trevelyan; what shall we not do with this weakling?"

At first their contempt seemed justified. When Balfour introduced the Crimes Bill on March 29 he appeared to be quite incapable of coping with the barrage of heckling from the Irish Members. He soon recovered his nerve, and became a master at the art of infuriating his opponents by his languid nonchalance and total indifference to abuse. Before the session was over he had piloted a number of highly contentious measures through the Commons. When the police panicked during a riot at Mitchelstown and opened fire, killing three people, Balfour backed them to the hilt and admitted no error whatever although privately he was well aware that the whole affair was a scandal. It was Mitchelstown and Carson, then a young government prosecutor, "that made us certain we had a man at last". Of course Balfour did not solve the Irish problem, but he did not expect to do so. He must have read the words of Lord Salisbury in the *Quarterly Review* of October 1872:

> The optimist view of politics assumes that there must be some remedy for every political ill and, rather than not find it will make two hardships to cure one.

But is not the other view barely possible? Is it not just conceivable that there is no remedy that we can apply for the Irish hatred of ourselves, that other loves or hates may possibly some day elbow it out of the Irish peasant's mind, that nothing we can do by any contrivance will hasten the advent of that period? . . . One thing we know we can do in Ireland because we have done it in India and elsewhere with populations more unmanageable and more bitter. We can keep the peace and root out organised crime.

This was what Balfour could claim to have largely achieved when some four years later he left the Irish Office to become Leader of the House of Commons.

Balfour was not quite as sceptical



Balfour (right) and the Earl of Wemyss on the tennis court; Wemyss, formerly Lord Elcho, was married to Mary Elcho—from the book reviewed on this page.

as his uncle about "the optimist view of politics" but he was certainly not an idealist. In this admirable biography of him, the best to have appeared so far, Max Egremont analyses with much perceptiveness Balfour's political "philosophy". He was a truly conservative Conservative. Once at a dinner party Mrs Sidney Webb asked him, "Have you ever wished to bring about another state of affairs to what at present exists?"—not, one feels, the sort of question that the "Souls" asked each other. Balfour replied, for once in a way simply, "I am a Conservative. I was to maintain existing institutions." This is, after all, much the best reason for being a Conservative, and it is undoubtedly the reason why the vast majority of Conservatives vote as they do. In addition Balfour was, as the more thoughtful Conservatives usually are, deeply conscious of the precariousness of society, the narrow border between civilisation and chaos. His vision, Lord Egremont writes, was "less pessimistic than that of his uncle, but also concerned with authority, hierarchy and the imminent danger of anarchic barbarism". It may, to a large extent, be the British electorate voted the Conservatives into power at the last election? Anarchic barbarism seemed quite near at times during the long winter of 1978-79. Law and order which cannot prevail in the absence of authority and hierarchy figured prominently in Mrs Thatcher's programme. Balfour would have approved.

Balfour's personality is enigmatic and elusive. Very different views of him have been held. Neville Chamberlain noted in his diary that "he always seemed to me to have a heart like a stone". Winston Churchill in that marvellous book, *Great Contemporaries* (1937), after paying tribute to Balfour's devotion to Britain and the Empire—"a laypriest seeking a secular goal . . . the personal qualifications of a great Pope"—commented upon "the cool ruthlessness" underneath his unfailing courtesy. "Had his life been cast amid the labyrinthine intrigues of Renaissance Italy he would not have required to study the works of Machiavelli".

The official biography of Balfour by his niece, Mrs Blanche Dugdale, appeared in 1936. It is an indispensable book, for she recorded many conversations which would otherwise have been lost to history, and every subsequent biographer has depended much upon it. But there is an element of family piety and a certain reticence. The more acid side of Balfour's character does not emerge. One cannot for example imagine Mrs Dugdale recording this letter to Lady Elcho—Balfour was writing from Dublin in 1889:

> To sit at dinner from 8.15 to 11.25; sit for that period between Princess Edward of Saxe-Weimer who is intolerable when sober and still more intolerable when drunk, and Lady Ashburne who is only saved from a similar condemnation by her excessive and almost preternatural ill-nature, and then to drive three miles back again to bed! This is what in Dublin we call pleasure!

Lady Elcho's relationship with Balfour was a subject which Mrs Dugdale could not discuss; for the Countess of Wemyss, as she had subsequently become, was still alive when the book came out.

The next important biography of Balfour was by Kenneth Young, published in 1963. He dealt with its matter candidly but it is far from clear that he was right in maintaining that they were lovers. Egremont is satisfied that they were not and that the language used in her letters is misleading. She had a brief affair in 1895 in the Egyptian desert with that indefatigable womaniser Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who recorded in his diary:

> To her friend, Arthur Balfour, she is pledged for more than is Hugo Elcho[1], Elcho loves, honours and respects him, and he is constant to her, and she has always been constant to him, and she is bound by a thousand ties never to give herself to another. Promises evidently at that moment not very effective. On this understanding he has been content that their love shall be within certain limits—a little more than friendship, a little less than love.

The limits were imposed by Balfour, not by her. Exactly why is not known—possibly his puritanism of his upbringing, possibly a physical reason. Nor do we know what went on within those limits. There is a reference in a letter to "fun". And does a Valentine message with a scratched-out birch rod have any significance? Lord Egremont says that it would be foolish to conjecture what form the "fun" took", and there the matter can be left.

What we do know is that, apart from May Lyttleton whom he intended to marry and who died of typhoid, she was the only woman he loved. In 1887, on the verge of leaving for Dublin where only ten years earlier one of his predecessors, Lord Frederick Cavendish, had been cut to pieces in Phoenix Park by a group of assassins with surgical knives, he wrote to his sister-in-law, Lady Frances Balfour: "Accidents have occurred to a Chief Secretary for Ireland. . . If the worst (as people euphemistically say I) should happen, cut open with your penknife the accompanying pouch and read the parcel inside. It relates to a matter with which only you can deal. . . ." (Kenneth Young, who saw this letter, but not the one in the pouch, understandably got the name of the recipient wrong and, reading "Francis" for "Frances", assumed that it was intended for Lady Elcho's father-in-law, Lord Wemyss.) The letter in the leather pouch was also to Lady Frances:

> I write this in a great hurry; but as you will only have to read it in the event of my death you will forgive my handwriting. I think you and all whom I love will be sorry that I am not any longer with you. But you will be able to talk it freely over with each other and all whom such an event may concern. There will, however, one who will not be in this position. I want you to give her as from yourself this little brooch . . . and tell her that, at the end, if I was able to think at all, I thought of her. If I was the means of introducing any unhappiness into her life I hope God will forgive me. I know she will.

Forty-three years later, after Balfour's death, Lady Frances took the pouch to Lady Wemyss. The two old ladies opened it together and found the letter along with a small diamond brooch inside. Balfour's heart was not stony. It was fear of some intense emotions which made him avoid, at whatever cost, emotional involvement.

Lord Egremont has written a memorable biography. He has had advantages denied to previous authors. Papers have been available to him since the abolition of the forty-year rule and from other sources, which were not available to Mr Young and Mrs Dugdale, his own family connection with the vanished world of the "Souls" and that fascinating late-Victorian intellectual, aesthetic, aristocratic coterie which, without ever quite "Kilvert" was the of which "King Arthur" was the quintessence—is another asset. But one can have assets and not use them. Lord Egremont has used his brilliantly, and his book replaces all previous lives of Balfour. He has summarised with admirable clarity the political issues, and he has given us a more convincing picture than any before of one of the strangest figures ever to have become Prime Minister.

Smiling at grief

By David Hawkes

CH'IEN CHUNG-SHU
Fortress Besieged
Translated by Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K. Mao
377pp. Indiana University Press
$17.50
0 253 16518 0

How many modern Chinese writers are widely known in the West? Lu Hsün for one, presumably, at any rate by name; but it is after all nearly half a century now since he died. Who else? Lao She? Does anyone remember *Rickshaw Boy*? Lin Yutang? But he wrote mostly in English for English-American readers. The younger generation of poets and novelists with whose names Robert Payne briefly familiarized us in the year or two after the war are now forgotten. Those of them still alive today, survivors of "re-education" and a dozen "movements", are old men in their sixties and early seventies, silenced long ago by political bullying or their own unwillingness to participate in the collective infantilism which ideologues sought to impose on the creative writer.

Ch'ien Chung-shu, the most intellectually distinguished of that generation, published his first novel thirty-three years ago—one of the best, some enthusiasts would say the best, Chinese novel of this century. So brilliant a beginning if it had been made almost anywhere else in the world would almost certainly have been followed by other equally brilliant and more mature successors. These would have been translated into half-a-dozen languages. Their author at seventy, which is Mr Ch'ien's age today, would enjoy an international reputation. But Mr Ch'ien wrote no second novel; his first novel has waited more than three decades for an English translation; and it is doubtful whether any but sinological readers of the *Times Literary Supplement* have ever heard of him.

In the decades following the establishment of the People's Republic in Peking the only work Mr Ch'ien was known, even by sinologists, to have written was an annotated anthology of medieval Chinese verse published in 1958. The footnotes to its masterly preface are characteristically sprinkled with references to his omnivorous, polyglot reading: Vida's *De arte poetica*, Alexander Pope's *Correspondence*, Anatole France's *La vie littéraire*, Carl Prantl's *Geschichte der Logik*, etc, etc. But after that a silence so complete seemed to descend on him that he was widely believed to be dead. In 1974 an old friend and admirer, Professor C. T. Hsia of Columbia University, even published a memorial essay about him by way of obituary.

Then came what I suppose we must continue to call the Fall of the Gang of Four, and suddenly he was alive and well once more. In the autumn of 1978 he was sighted at a conference in Italy, the old mordant wit and celebrated gift of tongues seemingly unimpaired by time. A few months later, in the spring of 1979, he visited America as member of some academic delegation. According to reports of that visit, he has been engaged during the past few years in an immense study of the ancient Chinese classics written in the elegant but archaic *wenyen* Chinese favoured by old-fashioned scholars—a language almost as remote from present-day speech as Latin from the modern European vernaculars. His wife, the former playwright Yang Chiang, has become a translator. Her Chinese version of *Don Quixote* was published in 1978.

Fortress Besieged (*Wei ch'eng* in Chinese) is the "*fortaresse assiégée*" of its French proverb: "*Le mariage est comme une forteresse assiégée: ceux qui sont dehors veulent y entrer, et ceux qui sont dedans veulent en sortir*" (Those who are outside want to get in, and those who are inside want to get out). Clearly, this is a novel about courtship and marriage—a discerning look at the mating habits of the male Western-educated Chinese of the 1930s and 1940s. The first generation who could freely choose, in some cases after a long struggle, whether they were worse off in the outcome than their parents. But it is much more than that. It is also a portrait—an intelligent, merciless mocking, often wildly funny one—of society approaching collapse. The author states as much in his preface, written in December, 1946:

> In this book I intended to write about a certain segment of society and a certain kind of people in modern China, in writing about these people I did not forget that they were human beings, still human beings with the basic nature of hairless, two-legged animals. . . . It took me altogether two years to write it. They were two years of great grief and disruption, and in the course of them I several times thought of giving up. . . .

The two years were of course the last year of the war and the first year of the "peace" which followed (Westerners often forget that for Chinese the war started in 1937 and did not really end until twelve years later, in 1949).

The novel is set in the period just before and just after the beginning of the war in China. It follows the fortunes (or rather misfortunes) of Fang Hung-chien, an intelligent, easy-going, well-meaning but unlucky and rather weak young man—the original Superfluous Man got up as a sort of lugubrious *picaro*; his return to China aboard a French liner from dilettantish studies in three European capitals, armed with a fake diploma obtained postally from a crooked Irishman in New York; his arrival in Shanghai where he is offered lodgings and a job in a bank by his deceased fiancée's father; the outbreak of the war; the bombing-out of his family; the collapse of his love-life owing to a weak inability to break off with one young lady before taking up with another; his breach with the dead fiancée's family; a nightmarish journey into the interior in the company of several other appointees to a third-rate provincial academy; his experiences there with the appalling students and even more appalling staff; the non-renewal of his contract because of a friend's copy of Laski's *Communism* (Home University Library) spotted by a rival academic in his room; his return, via Hongkong, to Shanghai with an unwanted wife; the miseries and humiliations of matrimony, exacerbated by the presence of the wife's malevolent ex-nannie and by the old-style awfulness of his family and the new-style awfulness of *hers*; and finally the break-up, after one scene too many, the suppriess return to a cold and empty flat, and the waking up in darkness—on the bed on which he had thrown himself fully-clothed—to the chimes of a useless, antiquated clock . . . (the heirloom, salvaged from the bombed ruins of the family home, which Fang Hung-chien's father had insisted on presenting to the young couple).

> "One, two, three, four, five, six." It was six o'clock five hours ago. At that time Hung-chien was on his way home, intending to treat Jou-chih nicely. . . . At that time Jou-chia was at home waiting for Hung-chien to come home to dinner, hoping he would make it up with her aunt and go to work in her factory. The irony and disappointment of men unintentionally contained in this out-of-date dinnertime event deeper than any language, than any tears or laughter.

Although the novel is not an autobiographical one, Mr Ch'ien shared many of his principal character's experiences. He, too, was an Oxford Scholar. He spent two years at Oxford University from 1935 to 1937 (unlike his hero, though, he wrote a brilliant thesis) and, after that, one year in Paris. He returned to China in 1938, the second year of the Sino-Japanese war, and held a succession of academic teaching posts, first in the interior and then in Shanghai. Clearly, much that the novel records must have been closely observed by the author's steely eye: the returning students "on the Vicomte de Bragelonne, the pseudo-intellectuals in the Shanghai restaurant, the miseries of wartime travel, the gargoyles on the staff of Sanjü University—all these, I am sure, owe as much to the author's observation qua to his invention. Even the rather flippant references to bombing strike me as authentic—exactly the way in which people in London used to talk about it during the war.

Lin Yutang's *A Leaf in the Storm*, which is set in China of about the same period, though by no means a bad novel, seems to me inferior to *Fortress Besieged*—not only because it has not the same hard intelligence, but also, because in *A Leaf in the Storm* Lin Yutang's much-vaunted humour seems for once to have deserted him. Parts of it reread today like wartime propaganda. The reason is, I suspect, that *A Leaf in the Storm* owes much of its background to the newspapers, which are strong on major horrors but have little to say about the boredom and innumerable petty privations which make up the everyday reality of war. From Grimmelshausen to Waugh those who have written about war from their own experience or observation seem more often than not to have written humorously. The stoic jest has a ring of truth about it. That is why *Catch 22*, for all its exaggeration, seems somehow a more truthful book about the last war than that turgid, overrated novel *The Naked and the Dead*. The laughter is in no way heartless: it is the natural reaction of the intelligent man to hardships which are incurable and have to be endured. Only rarely does the author of *Fortress Besieged* stop laughing and the sad face of the patriot momentarily reveal itself:

> The number of people in Shanghai profiting and the number going bankrupt from the national crisis increased simultaneously. Neither interfered with the other since the poor begged only in the major thoroughfares and bustling market places and stayed away from the quiet residential areas of the rich. They asked for money only from those on foot, unable to catch up with the rich in their sleek cars. Slums gradually spread like ringworm over the face of the city. Political terrorist incidents occurred nearly every day. . . . Newspapers promoting "Sino Japanese Peace" every day published lists of new comrades who had joined their ranks, while at the same time in another newspaper these "Japanese collaborators" were often declaring themselves "apolitical".

Whether the satirical laughter which echoes so loudly through this book is equally a gauge of truth I am not so sure. The high-minded satirist, intent to "lash the vice but spare the name", tends to preoccupy himself with types and "humours" to be strong on "characters" but weak on character. *Fortress Besieged* contains a whole gallery of grotesques, some of them very funny indeed, but for the most part they are two-dimensional. Some transform themselves into comic monsters before our eyes:

> When Han Hsüeh-yü heard that Hung-chien's contract was not to be renewed, he grabbed his White Russian wife and they hopped around the house like a frog and a flea. Henceforth his secret could not be divulged . . .

Or they exude putrescence, like the rebarbative Mrs Shen, whose husband turns out to be a Japanese collaborator and who smells so awful that sitting next to her makes you feel ill. When, as occasionally happens, we are invited to inspect the feelings or thoughts of these monsters, we do so with the slight sense of embarrassment one experiences on passing a shop-window full of dummies that have been temporarily undressed. Only the principal character has a fully-realized humanity. The others exist only as parts of the risible but totally hostile environment in which he moves, phantoms in a prolonged nightmare he is dreaming.

The slight "overkill" employed in the portrayal of a character like Mrs Shen whom we are intended to dislike—surprising in an author who is normally so fastidious—is also apparent in a too unrestrained use of allusion. Literary allusion plays an important part in the traditional verse and prose forms in which Mr Ch'ien showed precocious mastery as a boy; it enriches and enlivens the essays in Colloquial Chinese with which he delighted his contemporaries as a young man. But what dazzles and amuses in an essay can, in a novel, seem a mere cucumbrance to the action; and though the thesis-writer may rejoice to find *Fortress Besieged* almost as fertile a field for source-spotting as *Finnegans Wake*, the less motivated reader may sometimes wish that the text were a little less begemmed.

Take, for example, the passage in which the hero's friend Chao Hsin-mei invites his ill-assorted group of fellow-travellers to yet another meal in order to discuss the arrangements for their journey into the interior. It inspires the author to remind us of Napoleon's instruction to diplomats: "Toujours une bonne table", and of Lord Stowell's dictum that "a dinner lubricates business". But since this is a Chinese novel, such exotic references have to be laboriously worked into the text: the gossamer-light touch that would have served for a Chinese allusion will not in this case suffice. Inevitably the result is a trifle laboured: "it smells of the lamp" an old-fashioned scholar would say. Even more laboured is the schoolboyish foreign joke about Sara Bernhardt being so slim that swallowing a pill would have made her look pregnant which is dragged in at one point when the young woman who subsequently becomes the hero's wife is being scrutinized for signs of pregnancy by her malicious female colleagues.

Such lapses of taste are, as far as I can see, wholly absent from the beautifully-written final section of the novel devoted to the young couple's life together in Shanghai and the final break-up of their marriage. They are also absent from what I believe to be the best piece of fiction Mr Ch'ien ever wrote: a subtly-told, moving short story entitled "In Memoriam" about a lonely young wife's adultery with her husband's friend. "In Memoriam" was published in 1946, also the year in which *Fortress Besieged* was published. It is tempting to suppose that "In Memoriam" and the final section of *Fortress Besieged* represent a later stage in Mr Ch'ien's development as a novelist—a stage at which he felt free to leave the commonplace-book behind and give free rein to his talent. If that is so it must seem all the more tragic that there has never been—perhaps never will be—a second novel from his pen.

I first read *Fortress Besieged* in Chinese nearly thirty years ago when I was a young man. I thought it then one of the wittiest novels I had ever read. Rereading it now I still think it is a very fine novel; but I tremble for its reputation in the West (in the English-speaking West, that is: there are said to be forthcoming translations in Russian, French and Czech which I know nothing about). It is not the translators' fault that the task has proved too much for them: probably only the author himself could have done it successfully.

The dandyish style, wit and wordplays of the original make it the sort of text that only luck and an unlimited amount of time (more than most translators can afford) could do justice to. Obviously they have sweated blood over it. Sometimes they have come up with felicities. "Adulterous Smorgasbord" for the title of the poem by the pretentious modern poet was a stroke of genius. But even after making allowances for Britannic prejudice against the "geewhizz" style they have adopted, I still find it stilted, sometimes even inept. "It is said that 'girl friend' is the scientific term for sweetheart, making it sound more dignified." How can anyone with a feeling for language write a sentence like that and not see that it has got to be crossed out and retranslated?

It may not matter, of course. Dostoevsky's greatness as a novelist survived translation by Constance Garnett. (There are even those—I confess I am one of them—who prefer her translation to more recent versions). But Dostoevsky is a writer of the first sort of author. The 200-odd notes at the back should keep conscientious readers flapping the pages to and fro like a fan. Occasionally they break down, as in the case of "*en arige e il mondo*" which they print with a "*sic*" and confess they cannot trace. It is simply a misprint of "*e fango è il mondo*" which comes from a poem by Leopardi called "*A se stesso*". There are one or two other quotations which they either cannot trace or have not recognized as such, but they are very few. On the whole the notes are very full and very informative and much will be learned by the reader who takes the trouble to read them all. The only howler I spotted in them was the statement that "when Nanking, the Chinese capital, was lost to the Japanese in December 1937, the Nationalist Government moved its capital to Chungking, Szechwan province". Surely it was to Hankow that the capital was moved in December 1937? I do not think the move to Chungking took place until the fall of Hankow to the Japanese in October 1938.

Sue and counter-sue

By C. J. Dunn

PETER JUDD ARNESEN:
The Medieval Japanese Daimyo
The Ouchi Family's Rule of Suo and Nagato
246pp. Yale University Press. £11.
0 300 20341 3

This book follows the fortunes of the Ouchi family in Japan from their first appearance in the records in 1152 until their disappearance from the scene in 1558, completely and bloodily defeated by the Mori family, after having become virtually rulers of the two westernmost provinces of the main island of Japan, Nagato and Suo, now Yamaguchi prefecture.

It is a complicated story. For a country with a reputation for innovation, Japan has an extraordinary passion for keeping old institutions alive, and in the 500 years between the Genpei wars which brought an end to the power of the imperial court in Kyoto, or rather that of the Fujiwara family who ruled in its stead, and the setting up of the Tokugawa rule, the various provinces saw a succession of officials put over them by a succession of national rulers. These officials, and the various older landlords whom they did not necessarily replace but whose estates they nibbled away at, winning for themselves either actual territory or the right to some of the revenues from lands, all manoeuvred in a complex of suing and counter-suing. Sometimes there was armed conflict, but generally with no one set of persons completely disappearing from the stage. Through all of this the farmers toiled on regardless, knowing that it was up to them to grow the rice which supported the tax recipients foisted upon them.

The Japanese have always had a flair for making up new names to attach to new institutions, and medieval land tenure and officialdom was a rich field. In taking his reader patiently through the maze of terminology, Peter Judd Arnesen does his best to explain, but—a pupil of Professor Hall at Yale—he no doubt lives in an atmosphere where all this is commonplace, and the general reader, even the expert in feudal institutions, will find it difficult to keep up. It is thus a book for the specialist, and the specialist will be grateful for it. It is based to a large extent on the work of Professor Matsuda of Yamaguchi University, under whom the author studied, but it also bears witness to original thought. Apart from the detailed and authoritative information it gives on the Ouchi family, it also, taking them as example, throws light on the system that existed throughout Japan. But above all it is a regional study, typical of those which must be carried out if we are to learn what the local patterns were, rather than be satisfied with a generalized, and often false, picture for the whole country. The bibliography is impressive.

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A bite out of the big apple

By Valentine Cunningham

JOHN COWPER POWYS:
After My Fashion
287pp. Picador. £2.50.
0 330 26049 9

The importance for modern English literature of the publication of this "lost" novel that John Cowper Powys wrote in the immediate aftermath of the First World War can hardly be exaggerated. We had all wondered over "John the Talker", the revivalistically inspired orator, next in force only to D. H. Lawrence, failing so fictionally silent after his *Rodmoor* (1916). How odd a nineteen-year gap before *Ducdame* (1925). Perhaps it really had taken him that long to warm himself up for the hugely unstoppable outpouring of the later 1920s and 1930s that gave us in rapid-fire succession *Wolf Solent*, *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Weymouth Sands* and *Maiden Castle*.

It seemed, however oddly, that the speaker who made a life's work of immoderately "giving myself" (in every sense) "away", the lecturer who "often found it impossible to stop" after an hour and a half, sometimes even after two hours, who was terrified of constipation ("a twitching in my nether gut as if I were holding back the excrement of weeks") and who rejoiced in the idea of verbal diarrhoea (the once-in-a-lifetime "great pile" of erotic books "behind me, as if I had been some monstrous Stygian bird whose excrement was the literature of hell, in a public lavatory"), it appeared indeed that this disgorger of vocables by the hundreds of thousands had fallen in later war and early post-war years into the Coleridge oxymoron —endless talk, accompanied by broken-off poems and articles that expired abruptly in mid-sentence. What's more, it looked as though gargantuan John, monstrous ingester, whose formidably gross-feeding fictions are gluttonously gorged with people, places, things, had none the less failed to sink his teeth into America, had fallen back defeated from that giant continent and its mountainous cities, in particular New York, that he knew so intimately.

Well, at last we know: he wasn't stumped Coleridgeanly for words, he hadn't gagged on the richly fraced Pantagruelian grand of New York. *After My Fashion* lush precisely the huge panorama of America or New York that some readers of Powys have desired. But its generous biting off of the bitter matter of New York not only affords it a front rank in the process of English authors "imagining America", it also places it foremost among world literature's modern efforts to cope—one thinks particularly of Kafka's *Amerika*—with American impressions.

After My Fashion is by no means as long as *A Glastonbury Romance* —perhaps no novel, not even *Glastonbury*, should be. But the signs of that awesome "Druidic hypnotism of speech" which Powys attributed to John Geurd in that novel, of the endlessness, the "gibberish", the sheer ranting abundance to come (Powys got "extraordinary pleasure from reading aloud" *Finnegans Wake*), are very clear. Adjectives roll off the page in the excessive clusters that stuffed the lecturer's hours ("their old, fierce, hard, fantastic, hedonistic selves"; "their breathing, vibrating, passionate youthful bodies"; "these self-conscious, secretive, evasive, fragile, tenacious beings" "such rough, boorish, crude, impolite usages"). Loony, roomy, psychopathically dervish John, the Dionysos of East 14th Street—they're all his own labels—whose frenzied scamper about his prosaic podium ("one single twisting, leaping, shuffling, skipping, bowing and scraping human figure") he called a girding up of the loins to "dance before the Ark, like David or Dan Leno", is already engaging in his megalomaniacal "... dithyrambic dance of words. Like D. H. Lawrence, he repeats himself gladly. Metaphors, tags, phrases, adjectives, situations that take his fancy (like the central male character Richard Storm's continually going down on his knees before the laps of women), are sure to come back again and again. Words mesmerise more than they inform.

One much repeated word is "queer". Powys seeks to entice and shock the reader into a view of the world as skewed, queered. A major queerer has been the First World War—and *After My Fashion* must surely be placed alongside our great post-Great War fiction, like *Jacob's Room* and *Mrs Dalloway*, *From rural Sussex to raw New York* the War's horrific pressure is felt. Canyot, the English painter, wounded in the fighting, has only one arm to bear-hug Nelly Moreton with. The youthful doctor who attends the Revd John Moreton's deathbed is callously unmoved: "He had seen hundreds of deaths in France and this particular death had less effect upon his emotional capacity than the shooting of an aged dog." Post-War sexual relations are queer. "The youth of these after-war days" are ready to be excited by the "great new art" of Elise Angel (she's based on Powys's friend Isadora Duncan), on art, it's suggested by the Communist Karmakoff, that will go down even better in revolutionary Russia. Clearly, too, Powys's sense of "the calamity" of the modern—modernism rings like a litany through the book: "You modern writers", "these modern authors", "modern city", "modern way"—"the calamity of being alive at all on this harassed earth", is connected with Storm's assertion that "The war can never really end". The war chimes in with—it doubtless helped to nature—Powys's feeling for the universe as a masucho-sadistic place, a veritable destructive element.

Canyot and Storm scrap over Nelly and over Storm's critical interests in *vers libre* and other Francophiliac doings, as Nelly watches a couple of dogs fighting. A group of village lads shower on idiot kid with stones ("Squatting on the ground, his face streaming with blood, was a wretched hydrocephalic child beseiged on the earth with his clenched fists and uttering a horrible wailing cry"). His mother steps him severely for clutching on to a dirty sweetie: "'You all have to be slapped sometimes', said Nelly Moreton. 'I wouldn't have let him eat that filthy thing'." Love is evidently a process of wounding. "They were two human beings, engaged in the innumerable occupation of sticking poisoned arrows into one another's hearts". Nelly's tongue lashes, flicks, stings, causes to smart. Storm struggles through stingers to load her with honeysuckle: "He derived a savage pleasure from the nettle stings and thorn pricks." Old Mr Moreton, on the sun-struck walk that kills him, meditates on "the ... normal atrocities of creative nature, a rabbit killed by a weasel" ("gazing horribly and vacantly into the burning sky out of a great eye socket which was nothing but a dried-up hole of rusty blood"); it's a "jagged piece of iron" in his heart. So is New York for Storm: living in that city of iron-hard materiality is like "a process of spiritual surgery". "New York had left his soul naked, helpless, flayed and bleeding."

This strangely violent world is queer, too, because its author peoples it deliberately with odd types. He liked to claim affinities with the weird among writers, with Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Blake. He called himself a "Welsh Rasputin". When he talked of giving himself away, he meant "in whimsies, caprices, fantasies, maniacs, humours, oddities, idiosyncracies, apathies, antipathies, sympathies, prejudices, the whole paraphernalia of that psychic-sensuous margin of life which is the most precious thing in the world". The dumb girl Sally-Maria with whom Canyot holds one-sided conversation as he paints is such a Powysian marginal. But so too is Storm, gifted with this "deboshed" author's cravings for the limits of women and girls. As John Cowper haunted piers-shows and burlesque-shows, flaunting for "syphilid forms" in Chicago dives, tossing through penny peepholes in "caves of Venus Mechanistica" in the Bowery, so Storm yearns over Elsie Lorn in 6th Avenue peepshow ("Her arms, her limbs were bare; her nobly modelled breasts, under some light fabric, outlined themselves as the breasts of some Phidian divinity"), and takes to Catherine of the stunningly revealed long legs ("displaying a greater length of openwork silk stocking than he had ever associated in his life before with any respectable conversation"). Stockings, ankles, shoes abound: Powys has generously granted Storm his own foot fetishism. He's given him his own dyspepsia, too. Not the the grandly ulcerated acsle of the *Autobiography* ("my stomach seething with acids asruck from the rock of my nerves by the rod of my vice"), but enough to register Storm's anguish over the poverty-induced diet he lives on in New York, the poor material and spiritual fare of the marginal literary man, disconcertedly adrift between Paris, Sussex and the United States.

Storm's problems as "a chance-driven earth-wanderer", shared in a measure by Nelly his fellow endurer of New York—an exile made emblematic of "all the years of man's tragic wayfaring"—is a paler preview of Powys's fuller self-projection in the *Autobiography* as the Beckettian outcast with a bellyful of horrors:

> I can remember now exactly ... when walking ... through the darkening streets of some Midland factory-town, on my way from the railway station to where my host lived, how it felt to be driven to put down my bag on the kerbstone, and, thrusting my fingers down my throat in sublime disregard of the passers-by, to struggle to retch up some of the cruel burninness in my vitals. I can recall how once when I was doing this, certain artificial teeth, what nowadays they call a "plate", fell out into the gutter, and how I groped for them in the obscurity and how gratefully I pressed them back, all muddled, into my mouth and taking up my bag hurried forward once more.

Storm dies after carrying a broken-legged sheep through a terrific English storm: "as though he were carrying on his back the burden of his great unfinished poem ... which had now taken the form of a sheep!"; "as though God, too, like his poetry, had turned into a heavy woollen sheep that bleated pitifully into his ear". He is a model for Powys the masochistic bearer of his cross, loved into rest Louie Wilkinson called "his daily crucified posture", a traveller familiar to America's railway stations racked by the burden of life's depressing luggages. "He couldn't get a porter when he was being Jesus Christ."

The "evocation of a strange marginal purlieu": it is on the edge, where the borders of opposed worlds edgily smash and collide, that Powys believes "glimpses" into "the very secrets of things are permitted. And *After My Fashion* shows that his mastery of frontier insights was early on superbly achieved. To be sure, one of his most reiterated dualistic sets now seems rather heavy-handedly done: this novel's people are altogether too fond of generalisations about the dichotomous ways of men and women ("'Men and women were different things of each other', he muttered, 'and always will'"). But the bewilderments between good and evil selves are "endless", humanity, torn and divided between the two natures", between good and diabolic forces (Storm's inner critical demons, the Revd Moreton's yen for black masses), between God and Christ (that is between Lucifer "the Infernal Power of Malice" and Lucifer the Light-Bearer), as well as the hints of mysterious meanings bursting sacramentally through the physical, material world ("life extending a little further than the five senses") are all rendered as skilfully as anywhere else in his work. What's more, it is of special interest in this early novel, by an established critic who was turning himself into a fictionalising visionary, that Storm, the renowned literateur and critic, should be shown straining to channel his energies into a visionary poetry. And trapped between his proneness to morality his affection for Nelly by a "deadly" critical scrutiny and his own overwhelming by the "creative spirit" of Elise, he feels "doomed for ever to live this wretched halflife", "neither a normal human being nor a creative genius". He's killed by the strain.

Just so, he's torn (and he's a greater tearer-up, especially of letters) between France and England, and England and America. England's unthrobbing instinctiveness, its innocence and its, in sturdily unpretentiousness hostility to new poetry and new politics, its drawing-room stuffinesses, are all put down in comparison with France. "It is to escape women like ... narrowing, jeering Mrs Shutover, ... that people emigrate", reflects Storm. But once he is in New York, with its overpowering buildings ("huge erections", "iron and marble monsters"), its painted women and swamping crowds, its nightmarish subways, its soft drinks and Ebstein's laundry, Storm endorses Nelly's English longings for hardly landscapes, Sussex Downs and rainy fields. "There were no lovely fields or leafy lanes here in Manhattan"; even in Atlantic City the boardwalk is a fence against the ocean. "By means of its ironwork and its woodwork the American public loved to separate itself from nature and to dominate nature with a certain brutal contempt." A contempt Karmakoff aptly encapsulates in his comparison of "the huge cosmopolitanism of New York harbour" with the leafy provincialism of Southampton Water.

As Powys himself eventually did, the novel settles finally amid English landscapes, English weather, English pragmatism and softness. But much of its power undoubtedly consists in its persistent scepticisms about England, and the irresolute, limited attractions that it keeps admitting for the new arts of Europe, the new politics of Russia, and the new grandeurs of New York that somehow sum up all those new worlds: the Woolworth Tower, the Stuyvesant Theatre, the Pennsylvania Station. Here at any rate was a beauty and nobility that had something in common with [the] Sussex Downs."

JAMES MELVILLE:
The Chrysanthemum Chain
182pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.50.
436 27691 7

James Melville's second novel about Superintendent Otani of the Tokyo police is as good as, if not better than, his first, *The Wages of Zen*. In it Otani looks into the murder of David Murrow, an English language teacher. The murder of a foreigner is uncommon enough but one which turns out to have links with politics and organized crime is sufficiently ingenious. Impeccably written and carefully organized, with the Japanese background drawn in with a delicate touch, this is a thoroughly enjoyable book.

ERIC PACE:
Nightingale
247pp. Heinemann. £5.95

Harry Arloff, American commodity broker who prefers to be known as Prince Michael Arloff to his marks—is conned by a hooker into taking part in an attempt to help the Iranian crown jewels. The Iran affair ended here no longer exists, but the author—a foreign correspondent of *The New York Times*—knew it well and describes it vividly.

T. J. Binyon

Fables from the dark

By Jeremy Treglown

SAMUEL BECKETT:
Company
89pp. John Calder. £5.50.
0 7145 3806 X

As you would expect, the situation is as you would expect. A narrator narrates about someone almost terminally deprived, who may or may not be the narrator himself and of whom what can be said is debatable but in any case exiguous. The fiction exists on the brink of non-existence, and through proposition and counter-proposition constantly threatens to cancel itself out. Yet this minimalism and self-contradiction make it both a touching metaphor for human life and a vehicle through which the largest and strongest emotions about birth, childhood, love, old age and impending death unequivocally make themselves felt.

Why, since we know from the first sentence that what *Company* is about is more or less what *Malone Dies* or *The Unnamable* or *Not I* are about, should we read on? A lot of people won't, of course: few writers' non-readers are so resolute as Beckett's, or so vocal. But for others the pull comes immediately in the opening, which is both a shrug and an imperative: "A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine." And there is the initial notion that here as elsewhere in Beckett's dry scree the rare shoots will be extraordinarily vivid: and so it turns out, for example, in the single passage of romantic sexual reminiscence, with its sustained vowel-music:

> You feel on your face the fringe of her long black hair stirring in the still air. Within the tent, of hair your face sees shoulders, breasts, belly, thighs, knees, feet. Then you are in the open, on your back, and she bends over you, her hair falls about your face, you are in a tent of hair. She murmurs, Listen to the leaves. Eyes in each other's eyes you listen to the leaves. In their trembling shade.

Memory is a mixed blessing in Beckett's work and there is plenty the narrator/narrated-about would be glad to forget: the hedgehog he caught as a child, meaning to look after it, but neglected and finally discovered in a predicament horrifically (if over-obviously) similar to his own now—"You are on your back in the dark and have never forgotten what you found then. The mush. The stench." Some of the other recollections are successfully colder, more oblique. As a child, he goes shopping with his mother to Connolly's Scores and on their way home, thinking about the blue sky, asks her "if it is not in reality much more distant than it appears". He is ignored, so rephrases the question. "For some reason you could never fathom this question must have angered her exceedingly. For she shook off your little hand and made you a cutting retort you have never forgotten."

The enigma—why? and what was the retort?—is doubly satisfying because it conveys so well the confusingness of some childhood experiences, and is bound in with the questions *Company* raises about sexuality in fiction. As part of a story, the report in a sense would not exist even if it were dubbed: any more than the central character gains additional "reality" from being provisionally and belatedly named.

Authorial self-denial of such a kind can be tiresome in the subtlest hands, and Beckett does not entirely avoid either casuistry or straightforward tediousness in these 80-odd pages of large type. But the good moments have a lot of carrying power, and raise some disturbing questions: when the child is so bewilderingly rejected, for example, this is particularly true in the French text, whose word for "it" in the dark (not knowing who to see background drawn in with a notation of heaven, Beckett translates himself in both directions—*Compagny* was written in English and then translated into French. The little boy "Lovant les yeux au ciel" and asking his mother "s'il n'est pas en réalité beaucoup plus éloigné qu'il n'en a l'air" picks up a vein of Christian reference again common in Beckett and sometimes overworked here, but which gives the relationship between the narrated-about (born on Good Friday) and his father a special plangency. The father calls to the son, on a diving board high above the sea, telling him to jump:

> He calls, Be a brave boy. The red round face. The thick moustache. The greying hair. The swell sways it under and sways it up again.
>
> The far call again, Be a brave boy.

Beckett's gloom is always in danger of mawkishness: the snowy pasture in spring "afrolic with lambs ... and strewn with red placenta" is the sorrowful rhetorical conclusion. "And you as you always were. Alone." But there is genuine pathos in the idea of a writer keeping himself company with so incompanionable a fiction—"devising it all for company". The fable of one fabling of one with you in the dark."

And as always Beckett lightens his own darkness with austere hilarity. As the narrated-about's birth, when labour begins his father goes off for a walk in the mountains with a "flask" ("an quart de scotch") and a packet of sandwiches. On his return two hours later he is dismayed to learn that labour is "still in swing" and goes to the coach-house to shut himself in the driving seat of his De Dion Bouton. "You may imagine his thoughts", says the narrator, handing over to the reader all his own bewilderingly rejected, for example, imagining his thoughts as he sat there.

Archiepiscopal ambiguities

By A. J. Krailsheimer

DEREK A. WATTS:
Cardinal de Retz
The Ambiguities of a Seventeenth-century Mind
300pp. Oxford University Press. £14.
0 19 815762 2

If there ever was a Golden Age in which simplicity and integrity were the hallmarks of the ruling class, history does not record it, but, as Derek Watts observes in his opening lines, crisis and tensions, strange contrasts and paradoxes seem more than usually typical of seventeenth-century France. The contrast between appearance and reality is a major theme not only of moralists, but of playwrights, novelists, poets and preachers throughout the century. The stark dualism of Cartesian philosophy is only the expression of a tension of which the stylistic reflection is the ubiquitous antithesis in prose and verse.

The heroes, or the saints, attempted to resolve dualism by asserting the primacy of mind over matter, duty over desire, the service of God over that of Mammon, but for the many who fell short of heroism or sanctity the characteristic response to such inner divisions was pride at being able to recognize them. The importance attached to lucidity, however, by no means equals a cult of honesty. Self-analysis, especially in public, is never so suspect as when it involves seemingly frank self-criticism. In a deeply ambitious society Retz's particular ambiguities differ rather in degree and formulation than in kind from those of his contemporaries.

Dr Watts does not in fact undertake a study of Retz the man, but of the *Mémoires* (supported by the *Conjuration de Fiesque*, of which he published an excellent edition in 1967) and the composite picture of the author which emerges from that work. For all its considerable merits, this book will only be fully appreciated by those who know the *Mémoires*. Though oddly neglected today, Retz's 900 or so pages easily stand comparison with the six or seven times longer work of his more famous successor Saint-Simon, born four years before Retz died. At the level of pure pleasure Retz's style makes the *Mémoires* eminently readable, and the book (not published until 1717) is an example of Classical prose at its elegant best.

If the literary value of the *Mémoires* is high, the same cannot be said for its morality or historical reliability. The cynicism is at times breathtaking, and hardly mitigated by self-mockery, while any professional historian will be disturbed by the author's easy mendacity and fertile inventiveness. For Retz historical fact is a theme inviting variations, when it is not simply ignored.

Watts early makes the point that the *Mémoires* are more autobiography than history: "their essential truth is moral and psychological rather than historical". In Retz's own view "the writing of history should be the concept of an élite", for the pedantic recital of facts by some paid hack (as he saw the professional historian) will always miss out the vital motives known only to the main actors on the stage of history. Retz's peculiar form of autobiography thus shades into history at one extreme, it shades still further into fiction at the other.

For Retz, an intention frustrated by events, a failure which could have been a triumph carry as much weight in the scales of political and even moral history as what actually happened. So far does he take this view that he ends by treating events rather as Viollet-le-Duc treated ancient buildings. If his role would be enhanced by an improvized Latin speech, ostensibly quoted from an unnamed source, he quite falsely claims so to have improvized; if a hilarious anecdote about mistaking innocent monks going for a midnight bathe for ghosts or devils can be turned to good account, he borrows the story (from Tallemant) and assigns himself a leading role, though he was not even present. With Retz it is not so much a question of *pseudo d'escalier* but of building the grand staircase too.

Forced into the church so that the see of Paris should remain a family fief of the Gondis, after being held by three successive members, Jean-François-Paul de Gondi (1613-79), later known as Cardinal de Retz, recognized that his profoundly unecclesiastical temperament might cause him embarrassment. The second part of the *Mémoires* opens with the celebrated description of the retreat he made at Saint-Lazare (under Vincent de Paul) prior to ordination (1643) and consecration as archbishop-coadjutor, with right of succession, to his uncle. According to Retz, the priests treated indiscreetly of his uncle had so debased archiepiscopal prestige that he resolved to put things right: "le pris, après six jours de réflexion, le parti de *faire le mal par dessein, ce qui est sans comparaison le plus criminel*, que celui de faire le bien qui est sans doute le plus sage devant le monde" (italics in original).

One is invited to admire the cool rationality of the decision, while being shocked at its impiety. Granted that sexual behaviour, even in a prelate, is not an infallible index to piety, one may perhaps wonder if the list of eleven ladies cited as "among his mistresses" by one historian is really compatible with Retz's vaunted rationality. The plain truth seems to be that Retz was insatiably attracted to women. Indeed there is some evidence that the *Mémoires* may have been composed not for Mme de Sévigné, the usual candidate, but for her daughter, Mme de Grignan, some thirty-three years his junior, in whom what Watts bluntly calls his "senile passion" aroused strong aversion.

The ambiguity of the archbishop's double life goes, however, even deeper than the *Mémoires* disclose. The period of compositions lies between 1671 and 1677, and thus coincides with that of his much publicized conversion of 1675, when he withdrew to quasi-monastic seclusion. The jaunty account of his past misdemeanours comes oddly from a man whose conversion was accepted as sincere by qualified witnesses, who did not, of course, know the *Mémoires*.

A particularly offensive chapter on "Morals and Politics" studies another aspect of ambiguity. There is no doubt that Retz loathed and despised Mazarin, describing him as a disciple of Machiavelli, without knowing *The Prince* very well, if at all. In the loose pejorative sense in which the term was, and is still, used, Retz himself would seem to be conspicuously Machiavellian. As Watts points out, "Retz sees himself as a kind of virtuous opponent of the art of deception". This may be partly due to his dislike of violence and emphasis on prudence, but it chimes strangely with the equal emphasis he lays elsewhere on heroic qualities (typified by Condé) and especially *générosité*. As a pragmatic opportunist Retz never solved the problem identified as that of "the conflict between personal nobility and practical efficacity".

His thoroughly ambivalent attitude to the Paris mob, which he both feared and sought to be able to control, is realistic, almost uniquely so for the age, but quite unsympathetic. He seems genuinely to have respected the Crown, while remaining until his death on the most friendly terms with Louis XIV, but as an aristocrat, with all the ambition of his class, rather than as a docile subject. His respect for Richelieu and contempt for Mazarin is no doubt in part a matter of personalities, but it was the latter's alleged corruption and incompetence which made his ministerial tyranny intolerable to Retz. It is a nice point what Retz would have done if he himself had become minister, as he seems briefly to have hoped. With hindsight the *Mémoires* present their author's relation to the Fronde as salutary and responsible, but the frequent exuberance of the style betrays lingering nostalgia for the great game of conspiracy, insurrection and factional strife. Watts coins the admirable phrase "constructive subversion" to describe Retz's distinction between "the honourable function of *chef de parti* and the discreditable and dangerous role of *tribun du peuple*, or mob leader".

Retz's genius is for analysis, of motives and character, individual and collective, and if nothing but his portraits of friend and foe had survived his place in literature would still be assured. "Ce[sans] d'Orléans] avait à l'exception du courage, tout ce qui était nécessaire à un honnête homme." Mme du Montbazon (a former mistress) "était d'une grand beauté. La modestie manquait à son air. Sa morgue et son jargon eussent supplée, dans un temps calme, à son peu d'esprit." This identification of an individual's key characteristic is wholly typical of Retz's art, and naturally prompts the question of what his key quality was.

There is no answer to be found in the *Mémoires*; sincerity and exhibitionism, analysis and dissimulation are too inextricably bound up in his own self-portrait. The most telling evidence comes from long-standing friends and supporters; Mme de Sévigné, Vincent de Paul, many of the Paris clergy, above all that model of unworldly, the abbé de Rancé remained faithful and fond. Four months after Retz's death Rancé, who had known him for more than twenty years, wrote from la Trappe to an unidentified letter to M Dubastol: "Je suis certain qu'il ne jouait pas la comédie [on his plans for retreat]. Je ne puis m'empêcher qu'un homme que j'ai honoré et aimé avec la dernière tendresse soit éternellement malheureux." Ambiguous Retz undoubtedly was, but to inspire such an extraordinary sentimental from such severe spectators he must have possessed virtues which the *Mémoires* hardly suggest.

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The age of the mobsters

By Eric Hobsbawm

ALAN BLOCK:
East Side—West Side
Organizing Crime in New York 1930-1950
256pp. University College, Cardiff Press. £7.95.
0 901426 99 7

Books about gangsters are mostly of two kinds. The first kind is designed for the more bookish section of a public which enjoys real-life epics on the big or little screen. The appeal of these stories, like that of the *Iliad*, lies in the familiarity of their characters and events: Capone, the Valentine's Day massacre, the killing of Albert Anastasia who, as they say, "had one haircut too many". This does not exclude a thirst for further information, but it should preferably be given within the same epic terms of reference. The true mob buff—if introspection is any guide—is pleased to discover what precisely that human calculator Abbadaba Berman did to "fix" the "numbers" for Dutch Schultz, or to discover more about the career of the late Longy



Emmanuel "Mendy" Weiss from East Side—West Side

Zwillman of New Jersey; but he is a shade disoriented by the discovery that the well-known Zwillman had an equally formidable, successful, but hitherto publicly invisible, partner, one Joe Reinfeld.

The second kind of gangster literature is more in the nature of a morality play, and is periodically revived by reforming politicians. It presents gangsterism as an evil conspiracy, foreign in origin (preferably controlled by "the Mafia"), which preys on honest citizens and prevents America from living up to the expectations of her Founding Fathers. Its object is not knowledge but denunciation. While its inquiries have provided the bulk of our actual data about the mobs, its analytical value is close to zero.

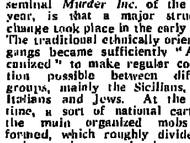
A third branch of the literature is written by social scientists, and may therefore make harder reading. Its object is primarily analytical, even if what it analyses is frequently the views of other social scientists. Alan Block's *East Side—West Side* belongs in this category. Paradoxically, its strength lies not in its analysis, which is interesting but unconvincing, but in its information. Dr Block has the elementary instincts of the historian: to look at the places and to count. They are rare in gangster literature. Nobody before him appears to have actually asked how many people were killed in gangland slayings in New York. (The answer, for the benefit of the statistically minded, is 242 killings reported in the press from 1930 to 1950, almost 80 per cent of them in the 1930s. Of the victims whose occupations can be identified, 70 per cent were professional mobsters; about two-thirds of the rest were employed in the garment industry, on the waterside, in construction or in the catering trade, and more particularly among the truck-drivers and union officials associated with these industries, for whom the 1930s were clearly a high-risk period.)

Dr Block adds greatly to our knowledge of New York mob history. He gives us the clearest and most concise picture of bootlegging in the pre-war half of it Jewish, a quarter Italian and the rest Irish and Polish. (The Irish did not have to be gangsters, as they dominated politics which, as Block shows, was closely related activity.) He brings out the close connection between bootlegging and the legitimate drink trade, and the old breweries who resumed control of operations after Prohibition, having probably got their cut of the business in the dry years, and such major beneficiaries of illegality as the Seagram distilleries in Canada.

He also demonstrates what every student of American labour knows, that the best way for a union to avoid being taken over by the mobs in New York (and elsewhere) was a dose of marxism in its leadership. On the other hand, and in spite of claims to the contrary, he has not basically transformed our knowledge of organized crime in New York between 1930 and 1950.

Analytically, the book contains one large and surprising gap. The basic thesis about American organized crime, propounded in the Kefauver inquiry of 1951 and, more convincingly, in Turkus and Feder's seminal *Murder Inc.* of the same year, is that a major structural change took place in the early 1930s. The traditional ethnically orientated gangs became sufficiently "Americanized" to make regular cooperation possible between different groups, mainly the Sicilians, other Italians and Jews. At the same time, a sort of national cartel of the main organized mobs was formed, which roughly divided up mob territory and the various branches of relevant business. Disputes were settled, so far as possible quietly, by a "Commission" of the main chieftains called "the syndicate" in which the leading of the Sicilians has been the subject of much argument. Unlike Kefauver, Turkus and Feder did not see the Mafia as dominant, but later inquiries have tended to show its impressive prominence. Whether this is a fact, or merely an optical illusion, due to the concentration by the media and by politicians on the Godfathers and the quiet shift of the big Jewish names from places like Cleveland, Detroit and New York out of muscle and into quieter kinds of business, is still an open question.

Dr Block is clearly out of sympathy with this view, but he does not seriously discuss it. What he does discuss is the rather different proposition, put forward by some criminologists, that syndicated crime tends to develop something like the structured organization of business corporations. He has little difficulty in showing that gangsterism does not fit neatly into organization charts, but this has no bearing on the existence or nature of the allocation of markets and territories between different mobs; nor on the role of the Mafia within such a network. In spite of its being encrusted in mythology, this network is not entirely imaginary. An event like the 1957 Apalachin "conference" (twenty-three New York City and New Jersey personalities, nineteen from upstate New York, eight from the Midwest, three from the West, two from the South, two from Cuba, one from Italy and perhaps twenty unknowns, all Italo-Americans) requires at least some commentary. Whether Dr Block agrees or not, his concentration on the Big Apple (with a justified emphasis on



Vito "Socko" Gurino

Brooklyn, home ground of Damon Runyon's Harry the Horse and the assassins of "Murder Inc.") prevents him from giving serious consideration to the Mafia and to nationally syndicated crime.

His own somewhat Hobbesian analysis concentrates on two points. First, he argues that the real basis of organized crime is power or extortion. Here he distinguishes between criminal "power syndicates" and "enterprise syndicates" which specialize in forms of business which happen to be illegal or on the margins of legality such as gambling, prostitution, narcotics and, during Prohibition, alcohol. The former tend to take over the latter. Second, he argues that, by its nature, the world of extortion precludes any fixed and structured organization: it is a fluid world in constant turmoil. "The most efficient organized criminals" were the most individualistic, the least committed to particular structures." His reading of "crime syndication" appears to be that it is a misinterpretation of the encroachments of power gangs on enterprise gangs in the early 1930s.

Both of his arguments may be true, but they do not get us very far. The point about organized crime in America is not so much to distinguish between extortion and enterprise—in the major mobs they fuse—but to inquire why the typical "big criminal" is no longer the great train or bank robber but the racketeer and provider of goods and services: no longer Jesse James but Joe Adonis or Moe Dalitz. He may, like Meyer Lansky and the late Bugsy Siegel, have begun life as an "enforcer", but if he remains primarily an "enforcer" like the killers of "Murder Inc" (actually known in the trade as "The Bums"), he remains a second-class figure. The question, which Block does not clearly face, is why organized crime in America is a business; though, by the standards of legitimate big business, probably a fairly modest one. For even straight "protection" is only a form of private enterprise, and, given inadequate policing, may be a legitimate one, as with our own security firms.



Jack Parisi

The lower-case i

By Craig Brown

DORY PREVIN:
Bog-Trotter.
An autobiography with lyrics
383pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £6.95.
0 297 77773 4

It may be said in Dory Previn's defence that her idiocy is not affected; nevertheless, it is exalted, exaggerated and choreographed far beyond its worth.

Dory Previn is the mopey-voiced, mop-haired singer-songwriter who was once married to André Previn. Her previous volume of autobiography, *Midnight Baby*, restricted itself to her childhood and adolescence. *Bog-Trotter* continues the story, ingeniously blaming childhood misfortunes for present neuroses. But there are plenty of freshly-wrapped neuroses as well—her abortion and the priest's reaction to it, her rejection by a younger man, another abortion, her schizophrenia and so on. She lists these upsets as if they were so many coupons which, gathered together, earn the holder the title of "Artist".

Bog-Trotter is subtitled "an autobiography with lyrics". Over half the book is devoted to reproductions of her lyrics, most of which have already appeared on her record sleeves. They are this sort of thing:

> i was riding in my car
> screaming at the night
> screaming at the dark
> screaming at night
> i wasn't doing nothing
> just driving about
> screaming at the dark
> just letting it out
> that's all i was doing
> just
> letting it out.

At pertinent moments, these lyrics are also inserted into the autobiographical section, presumably in the belief that some insight into the creative process will be gained. More often than not, the question vitiates the reader's mind is "why be so lengthy and glib in prose when you can be so brief and glib in verse?".

Criticism of autobiography is the harshest of all, for it is not only the book that suffers attack but the life. Miss Previn should not be upbraided with any severity for her choice of partners, her self-absorption, her constant reliance on the superficialities of Hollywood success, her ridiculous attempts to appear intelligent for one point she writes "To paraphrase Freud: what is it we all want?"), her wallowing in phobia, or her gullible theories about everything from people's initials to the relationship between mother and child, but for her then to number these multiple impurities as the natural outcries of the hyper-sensitive artist must be proper grounds for laughter and laceration.

Dory Previn worked on a song with Judy Garland shortly before Garland's death. She reveals that "I longed to tell Judy my own problems. Maybe if, in those days, we had been able to openly discuss and share, people such as Judy would be alive. Wounds fester if they aren't opened and cleaned out. Judy was the victim of a Band-Aid society. She was permitted to act it out, never to air it out." Ring out, Previn old, wring out the new, though America is not noticeably freer of the mentally disturbed, and the suicide rate continues to rise.

The prime difference between our society and the "Band-Aid" society is that self-absorption has been promoted to a level of reverence, not least by crank writers such as Previn, or the thousands of psychiatrists who are sprinkled over America like wasps on a wound, but by the New Journalists and many of the most lauded novelists. Previn is the worst so far; it is as if the holocaust had been halted mid-way, and she had been left with the belief that every event, every idea, every person, existed only for the light they shed upon her, that life outside was an elaborate display of mirrors all reflecting on herself, constructed solely for that purpose. The few passages in which she speculates on things other than herself exude fallacy or pretension or a mixture of both. "Most creative women commit bloodless suicide. Sappho, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, all suicides. Emily Dickinson, the Brontës, victims of death by self-ostombiment." Even these inaccurate ramblings suggest, through association, glamour for herself. At one point, Miss Previn claims that "a world that reveres the dancer, I search for the singer." As usual, I'm out of step with the times. But I'm resigned to plod. And no longer aspire to learn how to fly." The theme of this book is "look at little me", and this inverted self-denigration is further advanced by the title and by the use of the small "i" for the first person singular in the lyrics. These devices are even more transparent when they appear in autobiography, hardly the traditional mouthpiece of the meek.

As is now the norm for this type of navel reflection, the style veers from short sentences without verbs (tough, realistic) to long sentences jampacked with conjunctions (intense, personal). Sure enough, on page 126 comes the 200-word sentence with no punctuation at all. The quality of the book is perfectly complemented by awfully bad pictures by the man Miss Previn lives with at present. Joby Baker. In no doubt there will be more of the same in her promised third volume, which, she reveals, will come out under her maiden name, Dorothy Langan. You see, she has been actress, about songs

Rediscovering the soul of France

By Michel Jobert

PHILIP G. CERNY:
The Politics of Grandeur
Ideological Aspects of de Gaulle's Foreign Policy
319pp. Cambridge University Press. £12.50.
0 521 22863 8

The title of this book may well irritate, or at least provoke, the Anglo-Saxon reader. What! That European, that Frenchman, Charles de Gaulle, still, in the second half of the twentieth century, insisting on talking about "Grandeur", and not only to his fellow countrymen but also to Europeans, and to any nation prepared to show the will to live! Poor Europe, reduced to countenting itself with appearances and subservience, but nevertheless the centre of unrivalled material, cultural and moral power. Whereas the mediocrities of the time maintained a quiet flair, Charles de Gaulle was wrong (and this right from his moving appeal of June 18, 1940), and for the most part ridiculed the preposterousness of his attitude, this attitude has since become more patently justifiable with every day that passes. Self-awareness, effort, dignity, galvanic ambition, all these compelling virtues are life-giving; their absence is death. Today, Europe guesses this, though it does not want to admit it. France understands it. Many nations are turning to it.

Philip Cerny is a young researcher who knows French political life well and who does not bring any irrelevant prejudices to bear on it. It is not the least of his merits that he has seen the ideological significance—I was going to write, more exactly, the *spiritual* significance—of the message de Gaulle conveyed through his foreign policy. Rather than concentrating on its outlines, or dissecting its really not very complicated mechanism, Mr Cerny has been concerned to grasp its "essence", as a philosopher would say. This was the only way not to miss the point of the subject. Hence the success of this book. I am not complimenting him because he avoids the usual retelling of accounts that the character of de Gaulle gives rise to, especially in those milieux which we in France call "the Atlantic Alliance". No! As this is not a mediocre book, we should not tarnish it by considering it in mediocre terms—in "derisory" terms, de Gaulle would have said. Like the book of another American, Robert O. Paxton's *Vichy France*, this one deserves the praise of a Frenchman. For it gives him a better understanding of his own country and of a key figure in its contemporary history. It is very encouraging to see that foreign authors can avoid the pitfalls of flattery, hagiography and complacency better than our own. They also avoid denigration, hostility and incomprehension. It is natural for them to succeed, because their judgment is not obscured.

Speaking recently to a group of high-level British visitors who have flattered us by taking the trouble to speak our language, I said something like this: "When you say 'God save the Queen', you have expressed the essential. But if the French confined themselves to saying: 'God save the President of the Republic', it is quite certain that this invocation would not be sufficient to demonstrate our faith in ourselves and in our future. We are so diverse that we have a constant need for noble objectives, to help us towards unity. That is why we feel that the idea of grandeur is a necessity and does in contribute a true dimension to action." Nothing is more obvious than that de Gaulle's foreign policy made a clean break with the mumblings of the preceding regimes. The French have finally admitted this, have rediscovered themselves, not without some pride, and this has been perceived by foreign observers and by almost all politicians. We have only to watch how carefully they all try to find some connection between their actions and the General's "gesture", sometimes even going so far as to imagine what he would have said or done at the present time! His strategic choices, the orientation of his foreign policy, his vision of the world, and in particular of Europe, have never been challenged, even if his real or false disciples have often been thin on the ground.

The General taught us—or revealed to us—that the *attitude* in which one approaches a difficulty is more important than the actual result. That a people's will is more significant than its present circumstances. That the collective consciousness needs to distinguish, to see in the half-light of history, a few clear points, a few simple notions, and that this clarity and simplicity must have a galvanic power which leads to the power of self-transcendence. Cerny shows well how de Gaulle's foreign policy—which caused so much irritation around us—was in the first place a way of uniting the French on clear objectives, and it was no bad thing that the attempt was provocative. It was also a way of showing the face of France more clearly to other nations, and consequently of making the French more aware of their own existence, by seeing it through other people's eyes.

"France cannot be France without grandeur." Cerny appropriately reminds us of this phrase of the General's, which he had no doubt coined much earlier in his life. During the war, when the General's fortunes were at their lowest ebb, Churchill many times experienced the reality and inconveniences of this situation. The more wretched de Gaulle (France) became, the more awkwardly he behaved. But as an echo to this phrase from de Gaulle's *Mémoires de Guerre*, how can I refrain from quoting what Churchill (speaking of de Gaulle) said in his own memoirs: "The Germans had conquered his country. He had no real foothold anywhere. Never mind: he defied all." Had the circumstances been reversed, de Gaulle would no doubt have written the same of Churchill, and with equal accuracy. Which is to say that sometimes—though not always—nations have the statesmen they really deserve.

There are many of Cerny's remarks that I should like to quote, so true do they ring in both their analysis and their interpretation. In the first place, this phrase from his conclusion, which can be verified today both inside and outside France: "Gaullist foreign policy has become part of the French national myth, and its impact upon the political process within France is a continuing one." Then this, which explains de Gaulle's choice of foreign policy as the best lever to alert France to the need for unity: "In order to impress this consciousness upon the body politic, de Gaulle continually emphasized the one issue—an area which highlighted common and exclusive social membership and which could be invested with a high level of ideational content because of its specific cultural and psychological structure—foreign policy." Cerny is to be congratulated on the care he takes in describing the nature of this policy "which avoided adventurism", when it has been so decried, and shows how, while French initiatives and objectives were strenuously resisted in the United States and in certain other countries such as Britain and the Netherlands—an opposition which actually increased de Gaulle's credibility at home—they were cautiously welcomed in Russia, and wholeheartedly embraced in Rumania, China and a number of post-colonial nations of the Third World."

For such is the incantatory, premonitory aspect of this policy. Its aim was the understanding of the world to come, and not the perpetuation of the bloc system. It was not a mere record of the all too evident weaknesses of France; on the contrary, it provided the moral authority which enabled her to take her natural position in a world still in the making. Do we not still remember the magnificent speech de Gaulle made in Cambodia, in Phnom Penh, in 1966, in which he gave warning of the fatalities initiated by the American intervention and the tragic consequences that would ensue? But this speech went further, and described a model of honourable behaviour for the developed countries of the twentieth century, according to which they would no longer devote themselves to exploiting their dominant positions, or practising a barely modernized colonialism.

Cerny reminds us of Paul Valéry's dictum: "A great man is one who leaves others after him in a state of embarrassment." This assertion is hardly confirmed in de Gaulle's case, for having been privileged to go straight to the essential, and not to have to burden himself with details, even though he was a manoeuvrer, it was he who revealed the obvious to his country. But many other countries opened their eyes, at his appeal. Clearly, *vocabulary*, as always, plays more than one

The guerrillas' secret

By Dennis Duncanson

WILLIAM DARRYL HENDERSON:
Why the Vietcong Fought
A Study of Motivation and Control in a Modern Army in Combat
153pp. Greenwood Press. £11.50.
0 313 22708 9

President Johnson committed American combat troops to the civil war in South Vietnam in 1965 with the object of driving the People's Army back to their bases in Cambodia and North Vietnam; he ordered the bombing of lines of communication in North Vietnam so as to deter the Communist Party in Hanoi from sending them back in. Neither aim was achieved. The indecisiveness of the United States troops' almost unfailing victories in battle, and the evidence that the People's Army readily re-formed and returned, led to the inference that the guerrillas were, as individual soldiers, courageous beyond expectation. The Rand Corporation was called in to question "native communists and find out the basis of the secret of their endurance and how it might be undermined. Three dozen Vietnamese interrogators were recruited—men and women, neither supporters of, or aggressively hostile to, the communists—and they recorded interviews with well over two thousand guerrillas.

The material was published in the 1960s, and an analysis of it (*Revolutionary Organization* by Paul Berman) came out in 1974, though this is not mentioned by William Darryl Henderson in his *Why the Vietcong Fought*. Colonel Henderson has utilized captured communist documents as well, but concentrates on the Rand interviews. From these he judges that the secret of the Vietcong troops' endurance lay in the organization of the fighting force, and the organization of the "Liberation Army of China—of three-man cells; the cells fostered, under constant low-level political compulsion both mutual cooperation and mutual supervision which prevented cowardice in battle. Henderson maintains that the example the People's Army set is valid, not merely for guerrilla fighting, but for all modern armies, for whom tactical decentralization of command is a desideratum today even in conventional wars.

Whether or not that last proposition is sound, one must ask, *were* the Vietnamese guerrillas exceptionally brave? Colonel Henderson analyses no battles to prove it. The men interviewed for Rand mostly surrendered in order to escape exposure to danger, above all from the bombing which many commentators have pronounced futile. In fact, during the four years of the Rand inquiry, forty-eight thousand communist surrenders were recorded, or about one in six of the total strength claimed by their commander at the end of 1966; there was abundant rural manpower to take the defectors' places, and that factor may have counted for more than the three-man cells.

It is hard to envisage any form of combat *less* courageous than "protracted war" (better translated "war of endurance"): the tactical principle never to commit the men to an engagement save at a time and place affording, however momentarily, overwhelming superiority, and the strategic principle of never presenting a defensive target that can be hit back, are enjoined all the time in the writings of both Mao Tse-tung and his disciple, Vo-nguyen-Giap. The Vietnamese "freedom fighter", rarely a volunteer himself, just as rarely shrank from pressing others into his unit; he was constrained by no answerability at law, and was cunning, not gallantry, which won him acclaim on his own side, in a struggle whose fortunes were weighted strategically in his favour by the unassailability of his "great rear bases" in North Vietnam and (at this period) China. The courage that it takes to blow up a bridge on a single night is only a fraction of that which is needed to stand guard on the bridge night after night and keep it from being blown up, as the Vietnamese anti-communist defenders had to do. The targets of guerrilla attack by mortar, mine or napalm were as often civilian as military, the victims of landmines under culverts as often peasants going to market, or children to school, as they were soldiers rushing to aid beleaguered village militiamen; it was the guerrillas' fellow countrymen who suffered nine-tenths of the casualties, not the intruding fellow countrymen of Colonel Henderson.

Cerny reminds us of Paul Valéry's dictum: "A great man is one who leaves others after him in a state of embarrassment." This assertion is hardly confirmed in de Gaulle's case. For having been privileged to go straight to the essential, and not to have to burden himself with details, even though he was a manoeuvrer, it was he who revealed the obvious to his country. But many other countries opened their eyes, at his appeal. Clearly, *vocabulary*, as always, plays more than one

The Fall of South Vietnam (267pp. New York: Crane, Russak and Company, Inc./distributed by Frederick Warne. £12.95. 0 8448 1345 1) is a report summarizing the extensive oral and written statements of twenty-seven former high-ranking South Vietnamese military officers and civilians about their perceptions of the causes of the collapse of South Vietnam in the spring of 1975. The statements were gathered by the authors of this report, Stephen T. Hosmer, Konrad Kellen and Brian M. Jenkins. The study was carried out under the aegis of the Rand Corporation.

According to those interviewed, there were some half-a-dozen principal causes of the South Vietnamese collapse; these included deficiencies in the regime's political and military leadership, planning and organization, but the fundamental cause of the debacle in their view was the American rule in the war. This role had two aspects. Before the Paris Agreements of 1973, it was seen as that of a "super-ally" who did not properly understand the nature of the war, of the enemy, nor of South Vietnamese society. After the Agreements, the American role in their opinion took the form of a "simultaneous callous "abandonment" of South Vietnam.

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Monsters of the Belle Epoque

By Anita Brookner

ARTHUR GOLD and ROBERT FIZDALE:
Misia
The Life of Misia Sert
337 pp. Macmillan. £10.
0 333 28165 9

Her mother, on hearing rumours of her husband Cyprien Godebski's unfaithfulness, got on the train in Paris and headed for St Petersburg. She was nine months pregnant at the time. She arrived in snowy weather, tracked the erring husband to his mistress's house, then collapsed and died, after giving birth to a daughter.

After such an extravagant début, the child, Marie-Sophie-Olga-Zénaïde Godebska, called Misia, could obviously not be bound by ordinary rules of expectation or behaviour. Her infancy was a muddle of material luxury and emotional confusion, as she passed into the care of grandmothers, stepmothers, and mistresses, was sent to a convent school, was promised a brilliant career as a pianist, came into a useful amount of money at an early age, and became accustomed to the praise of luminaries such as Liszt, who heard her play and paid her his standard graceful compliment: "Ah! If only I could play like that!"

In the background was her father, and her move of sensual determined Peruvian generals and monuments with titles like *L'Immigration polonaise à la France hospitalière*: violent, capricious, contemptuous, energetic, indulgent, and dictatorial. The paternal example was Misia's early imprinting. She was to break her rather untutored heart over two such men, her second and third husbands, Alfred Edwards and José-Maria Sert, both of whom deserted her. Yet her major claim on the attention of posterity—for she seems to have been rather dull in her own right—was her first marriage, at the age of twenty-one, to Thadée Natanson, the second of a trio of talented Polish-Jewish brothers, and founder and editor of *La Revue Blanche*.

A photograph of Misia taken at this time shows her to be a slightly coarse and unfinished girl, very attractive with her abundant hair and her mouse of sensual determination. Immediately after her marriage (which takes place on page 33 of this book, leaving us with another 300 pages of dithyrambic name-dropping to go) Misia became hostess to as clever and pleasant a group of artists as ever existed in France. It must have been an ideal life. Money was no problem. Space was no problem, for the Natansons bought an enchanting house called La Grangette at Valvins, and when it became too small, exchanged it for an even grander manor house called Le Relais at Villeneuve-sur-Yonne.

Adultion, that commodity indispensable to hostesses, was even less of a problem, for there to pay homage were all the contributors to her young husband's journal: Vuillard, Bonnard, Toulouse-Lautrec, Vallotton, Roussel, Mallarmé, Debussy, Verlaine, Octave Mirbeau, Romain Coolus. The young Proust expressed a desire to call, but unfortunately his parents disapproved.

At this period of her life Misia was painted many times: as a schoolchild by her sister, by Toulouse-Lautrec at the piano, in a chambrous and over-furnished orange interior, by Vuillard, again by Vuillard, relaxing in a glow of lamp or firelight against a wallpaper patterned with sunflowers; and again, by the same artist, in a marvellous checkered peignoir. Renoir painted her with her strange red hair *en brioche*; Vallotton painted her wearing a pink dress in a blue interior; and Bonnard painted her, making her look older and more knowing than her years. His "Misia au canapé" is less a study of an individual woman than a concatenation of reds and pinks, and scents. In its slightly sinister conception of Misia as a spreading bourgeois odalisque, a deliberate travesty of the slim, shy young woman she continues to be in the photographs. Yet it is Bonnard's version of Misia that has survived, although it contains no element of her banal and extravagant story.



A drawing of Misia by Pierre Bonnard c 1900, from the book reviewed here.

So Misia knew everyone and everyone knew Misia. She was already a reigning Parisian personality, present at every social occasion of note. She was at Sarah Bernhardt's little luncheon for five hundred, at the Grand Hotel, and at the first night of *Ubu Roi*. Her particular gifts are somewhat difficult to evaluate. She was undoubtedly sensitive to music, which she understood but played with too much brio. She was indifferent to painting but fond of artists. As for literature, she gives no evidence of ever having read a book. She appreciated the glamour and pleasure of performance and of feeding indispensable to performers. She was careless, insatiable, enthusiastic, credulous, and without occupation. She had the temperament to turn out allegories like those produced by her father or her third husband: facile and prolific panoramas, impressive in scale, easy to understand, intellectually vacant. We are not too surprised to read that Misia enjoyed the 1900 Exposition but was bored by the Dreyfus affair.

Not so her husband, Thadée, who was interested not only in Zola's defence of Dreyfus but in the theories of Léon Blum, and who in due course exchanged literary journalism for the Rights of Man. He underwent a fairly rapid conversion from capitalism—he had plans for a model hydroelectric plant in the south of France—to socialism, in which capacity he proceeded to lose (not to forage, to lose) all his money. He began to look for financial backing, and it was at this point, when Misia was twenty-eight, after seven charming years as Thadée's wife and muse of *La Revue Blanche*, that the Natansons fell in with Alfred Edwards. Misia's age of innocence, always slightly flawed by her imperfect understanding of moral issues, came to an end.

Edwards, a tycoon of dubious descent and reputation, was famous for the wealth, his extravagance, and the violence of his sexual passions. As he was attracted to Misia, he immediately offered Thadée the directorship of a coalmine in Hungary. There, it was understood, Thadée was to educate the workers and help them to a fuller realization of life. Among the singing artisans of Koloschvan he would forget the petty intrigues of *La Revue Blanche*. It seemed like a good exchange. Misia, never a fool, explained to Thadée that the whole thing was a ploy, that Edwards was intent on supplanting him and that his methods were extreme. But if it was a plot, it was a plot in which everyone could collude: Thadée, who begged his wife to become Edwards's mistress so that their source of income would be assured, Edwards's wife, who told Misia that her reluctance to comply had overpowered Edwards's brother-in-law, who pointed out how badly she was affecting Edwards's attacks of asthma, and of course Misia herself.

Since the *richissime* Edwards was unattractive, vulgar, hysterical, and probably mad (he was remanded for his coprophilia), since Thadée had, to an unprejudiced eye, also gone off his head, since Misia was surrounded by manipulative and conniving acquaintances, all much cleverer than she was herself, one wonders why she did not simply wash her hands of the whole lot of them and retire for a suitable interval to Le Relais or to one of her many haunts in and around the Place de la Concorde. (A suite at the Hotel Meurice was retained for those days when she wanted a rest.) Instead, she slipped, unhappily but knowingly, from the position of admired wife of an influential editor to that of mistress of one of the most unstable men in Paris. In 1903 they were in Madrid; Misia admired a fan and Edwards promptly bought up all the fans in the city. This took a little time. One imagines Misia, locked in her hotel bedroom, with little to look forward to except the day's tribute of fans. Yet she chose this life, possibly because, as the sympathetic writers of this book maintain, she admired strong men, or because Edwards reminded her of her father, or perhaps because she was shallow, greedy, and not very bright.

Edwards gave her so many jewels that in the end she shoved them carelessly into drawers and bureaux. A former friend, Jules Renard, said of her: "Misia no longer knows how to dress except expensively." The standard properties of high life—a densely furnished apartment in the rue de Rivoli, a yacht decorated with "priceless" antiques—won her over. She loved the style, which was so excessive that normal judgment was suspended. Bonnard, who, despite a polite letter, must have viewed her evolution with alarm and distaste, began to see her in tones of red, orange and sulphurous pink. "Misia au canapé" is, of course, knowing, of indefinite outline, began to take shape. Bonnard is a very moral painter.

Misia married Edwards, for by now she could see no reason for not doing so. With this second marriage she drops out of the annals of cultural history and into those of *chronique scandaleuse*, from which she was never really to emerge. For Edwards, having exhausted the pleasures of fan-hunting, fell in love with a very young actress of astonishing beauty called Geneviève Lantelme, and Misia, on receiving this, promptly fell in love with Edwards. She called on Lantelme in her apartment in the rue Fortuny and was told of Lantelme's conditions for letting Edwards go: Misia's pearls, a million francs, and Misia herself. Even Misia was shocked by this last suggestion and eventually she did let Edwards go, their marriage had lasted only four years. Lantelme died, in a mysterious drowning accident, in 1911. Edwards died, of influenza, in 1915. He made no provision for Misia in his will.

It was at this juncture that she met her third husband, José-Maria Sert, known as the Tiepolo of the Ritz for the grandiose and high-handed manner in which he treated both art and life. As a painter Sert was as bad and as inexhaustible as Cyprien Godebski had been in the other genre: acres of fresco filled with life-sized figures, animals, and classical architecture in a state of disruption, all done in a very hard outline, as if word had come through posthumously from Giulio Romano saying through the medium of Stanley Spencer. Again—and a certain patience is required of the reader at this point—Sert was rich, mad, ugly, impetuous, and masterful. The authors state, earnestly, that "at last, in Sert, she had found a man on whom she could rely". She became his mistress and took her place once more in a certain stratum of Parisian society. For not only was Misia notorious and established; she was once again a patron of the arts. Misia had discovered the Ballets Russes.

Her former training as a pianist and her undoubted if erratic musical sensitivity made her sympathetic to the tonal novelties of Stravinsky. Her appetite for extravagant behaviour and for the heightened life of theatrical performance fitted her beautifully for her role as interpreter and muse, a role she carried out faithfully until Diaghilev's death. As against this, she embraced, perhaps too fervently, the intense homosexual intrigues surrounding Diaghilev, with whom she enjoyed the amitié amoureuse which apparently supplied an essential need. Letters of an obstructive, excited, and intrusive nature flew between Misia, Diaghilev, Stravinsky and Cocteau. The First World War, in which she behaved gallantly but briefly as a nurse, was abandoned for the delights of touring northern Italy with Sert Diaghilev, and Massine. From Switzerland Stravinsky sent letters expressing wounded pride that she did not enjoy his *Pieces for String Quartet* and yet more letters indicating his need for ready cash. Stravinsky turned against Diaghilev, as did Bakst and Cocteau, and they all did it through the medium of Misia. Diaghilev justified himself, again through the medium of Misia, by denouncing the story of the ballet *Parade*, in the course of which Diaghilev, Picasso, Satie, Cocteau and Massine all animadverted against each other, went to Misia's head, and in due course everyone involved joined forces against Misia. She pondered the friendships before the opening night, to which she wore a silver tiara; in fact it must be said that she never lost a friend. Cocteau remained devoted and Picasso asked her to be a witness at his wedding to Olga Kokhlova.

A new friend, Coco Chanel, emerges at this point, and theirs was a realistic friendship, with no love lost. Misia was in her mid-forties, Chanel ten years younger. Misia launched Chanel into society and Chanel, to her credit, kept her public gratitude bland throughout. Misia's head was well lost by this time, which is not surprising in view of her own uncertain standards and the quantity and quality of the admiration she received. Paul Morand compared her with Mme du Deffand, to the latter's disadvantage. Chanel was unaffected by all this silliness. She loathed Sert, complained of his smell, but steadily enjoyed his hospitality. Some said that the two women were lovers, but this seems highly unlikely. There was, however, a genuine camaraderie between them which lasted into their old age; fidgety days when they made their conspiratorial journeys into Switzerland for supplies of cocaine and morphine (for both became addicts). Chanel was horrified to see Misia inject herself through her skirt, in a Paris street. Yet Chanel was to lay Misia out on her deathbed, and to place on her breast a perfect pink rose: the only gesture of tenderness for which she is remembered.

In 1920, at the age of forty-eight, Misia married Sert, her youngest genius, still in great demand for his explosive frescoes, which now decorated town halls, casinos, hotel ballrooms, liners, and the headquarters of the League of Nations. They moved into a suite at the Meurice which Sert proceeded to improve with Greek marbles, oriental vases, and rock crystal chandeliers. He was unfaithful to his new wife almost immediately, a fact which caused her to fall in love with him. Full realization of her unattractive situation was long in bay by new friends and protégés: Les Six, Reverdy, Radiguet, Lucien Daudet. Sexually as well as socially, a note of ambivalence, of bad form, was becoming habitual. Elsie Proust, Diaghilev, Chanel behaved badly and were expected to. Diaghilev had Massine beaten up by hired thugs and swore that Misia was the only woman he could ever love. Both agreed that Misia had had its day. They referred to the works of their new friends as "des petites crottes adorables".

But this mood of middle-aged wisdom was shattered by the most unbelievable of peripeteia. Sert, like the Renaissance man he professed himself to be, kept open studio. One day he had his eye from an aspiring nineteen-year-old Basque girl called Roussadana Mdivani: Roussy. He fell in love with her, to the point of delirium. It was the Lantelme situation all over again, and once more Misia dared up to demand a reckoning. But this time she was dealing with nothing so straightforward as a financial settlement; she was dealing with a waif, an unhinged childlike beauty whose only commerce was sensual. The outcome was surprising: Misia fell in love with her too. Roussy needed them both and both needed Roussy, surrogate child, surrogate lover, surrogate protégé. Great and bad changes ensued. In 1927 Sert and Misia were divorced and Sert and Roussy were married. It was this event, and the death of Diaghilev, that finally toppled Misia from the extravagantly lofty position she had now occupied for nearly forty years.

She became a little mad, took more drugs, prowled round the new Mme Sert's marital bed. Her eyes were affected by the shock and her right began to fail. Yet she outlasted Roussy who, like Lantelme before her, died young. At the age of sixty-six Misia was alone, except for Chanel, older than her years, elegant and as lacking in compassion as ever. She still professed to love Sert. She still kept a salon of sorts, although its habitués were now film actors and fringe members of café society, ageless young men who declared her immortal. Sert, who managed to obtain unlimited supplies of caviare throughout the Second World War, and who managed also to be both a collaborator and to obtain the release from detention of several of their friends, died in 1945. He was buried in the habit of a Capuchin monk, the final note of bad taste to crown his sad decline. Paul Claudel assured Misia that he had gone straight to Heaven, but she, knowing better, perhaps, never ceased to mourn him. Misia herself died in 1947.

She had performed a certain function in society, had kept open house, had known everyone without understanding anyone, was bizarre enough to captivate, was talking point, was a stand-by. She was rich and easy to know and endlessly enthusiastic. Her faults were engrammed into her and did not disappear. Nor did they seem to increase, to judge by those who remembered her. Her function was a sterile one and it can be said that she fulfilled it magnificently.

Mr Gold and Mr Fizdale, the dedicated authors of this chronicle, did not of course know Misia. Their method, in writing this book, seems to have been to interview a number of spry old parties who had some acquaintance with her, and then piece as of necessity filled with a review of the cultural stage on which she so assiduously performed. Thus we move through the very disparate phenomena of the Revue Blanche, the Ballets Russes, Surrealism, and high fashion at a rather undifferentiated pace. Their enthusiasm and admiration know no bounds and extend even to figures who may have been less well-intentioned than they suppose. Such a one is Misia herself, whose parting shot to the young Oakes was supposedly consolatory. "Je vous couche de la vie" is interpreted as "un ce merde la" is interpreted as "an exaggeratedly gallant version of the French 'Good luck'". I hope they had a happy time working on the book, which should satisfy the appetite for unobjectionable public opprobrium. Unobjectionable public opprobrium for monsters of the Belle Epoque. Misia would undoubtedly recognize it as a fitting tribute.

Friendly enemy aliens

By Bernard Wasserstein

PETER AND LENI GILLMAN:
"Collar the Lot!"
How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees
334pp. Quartet. £8.95.
0 7043 2244 7

"Collar the lot!" is the phrase attributed to Churchill at the height of the "fifth column" panic of the summer of 1940. According to V. F. W. Cavendish-Bentinck, Chairman of the Joint Intelligence Committee at the time, the effect of the Prime Minister's utterance was electric: "Somewhat in the same manner as the henchmen of King Henry II rushed to slaughter Thomas à Becket, orders were given to MI5, the police etc, to arrest all Italians, with the result that restaurant keepers, some of whom had been here for 30 years and had fought for us in the last war, were put into jail." F. V. Cochis, the Italian general manager of Claridge's, an employee of the hotel for twenty-one years, was peremptorily sacked. Alberto Loria, an Italian Jew resident in Britain since 1911, who had been awarded the OBE for his work for the Ministry of Munitions, was arrested. Among the 4,000 Italians interned in the fortnight after Italy's declaration of war were three hundred British subjects of Italian descent.

But Italian restaurateurs and organ-grinders formed only a small fraction of those seized. Of the total of 27,200 aliens arrested, the majority were refugees from Germany and Austria, opponents of Nazism, who were dubbed, in the jargon of the time, "friendly enemy aliens". Most were Jews, socialists, or former concentration-camp inmates who had been officially designated by British aliens investigation tribunals as "refugees from Nazi oppression". At 1.30 pm on July 13, 1940, there was a police swoop on the Hampstead Public Library, when a group of CID men walked in and ordered all Germans and Austrians to leave (quietly). They were presumably acting on the basis of the "known haunts" theory of criminal behaviour.

Most of the aliens were deposited in hastily organized internment camps. Some were in incongruous locations such as Butlin's Holiday Camp at Clacton-on-Sea or an unfinished council housing-estate at Huyton near Liverpool. The Isle of Man, which had housed enemy civilian internees during the First World War, became a vast metropolis of aliens. The governor of the island initially declared, "The only good Hun is a dead Hun!". But the seaside landladies of Douglas, at first resentful of the uninvited foreign intrusion, soon welcomed the relief thereby afforded for the wartime collapse of the Manx tourist trade.

About eight thousand of the internees, at Churchill's insistence, were deported to Canada or Australia. In Manchester Detective-Constable Robert Hick arrested Ernani Landucci, who had worked at a hotel in the town for thirty years. In his memoirs the former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police recalls that, far from seeming an enemy agent, Landucci "looked like an Italian gentleman, but very frightened Italian waiter". Landucci was one of the several Italian waiters and chefs killed when the ship on which they were being deported to Canada was torpedoed by a U-Boat in July 1940. The government repeatedly denied that refugees had been among the six hundred Germans and Italians who drowned on the Arandora Star, but Peter and Leni Gillman produce some striking evidence of an official "whitewash" (as one Foreign Office official privately termed it).

What is the explanation for this bizarre black comedy? The authors indulge in some not altogether convincing conspiracy theorizing as regards the role of MI5. But it seems more likely that war hysteria and official bungling were among the chief causes. Certainly this book documents amply the xenophobic panic which was the natural accompaniment to the invasion scares of that summer.

The *Daily Mirror* pronounced the London Italians (appropriately adorning a culinary metaphor) "an indigestible unit of population". The former British Minister to The Hague, Sir Neville Bland, was the author of a widely circulated Whitehall memorandum in which he stated, with the supposed authority of a witness to the Nazi onslaught on Holland, that "the patriest kitchen maid not only can be, but generally is, a menace to the safety of the country". Sir Neville fanned the flames of public hysteria with a similarly bonechanded BBC broadcast on the fifth-column danger.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Gillmans' investigations is what they reveal of the social attitudes of those involved in planning and implementing the internments and deportations. We learn, for example, that the plans drawn up by the War Office in 1938 called for the division of internees according to social class. Army officers, senior civil servants, and those who "might appear to chief officers of police to be of good social and financial status" could pay 4s 6d a day for high-class food and accommodation, while the remainder would receive only a basic standard. The latter group would also provide batmen for their betters at a ratio of one to ten.

More sinister than this innocent imposition of the English class system were some of the attitudes of those placed in charge of the deportees. The Gillmans quote from the report of Lieutenant-Colonel W. P. Scott, in command of troops accompanying deportees to Australia aboard the Dunera. Scott reported that the aliens could be divided into three categories. First, there were German Nazis whom he described as "of a fine type, honest, and straightforward, and extremely well disciplined". He added: "I am quite prepared to admit, however, that they are highly dangerous." Secondly, there were Italians: "This group are filthy in their habits, without a vestige of discipline, and are cowards to a degree." The third group were German and Austrian Jews of whom Scott reported: "Can only be described as subversive liars, demanding and arrogant, and I have taken steps to bring them into my line of thought." The "steps" to which Scott referred were later officially admitted to have included the physical maltreatment of the deportees and the theft of their valuables (for which the Government eventually paid £30,000 compensation).

But, in spite of such instances of brutality and robbery, the general treatment of the internees was mild, and the episode as a whole deserves to be seen rather as a scandalous waste—waste of manpower (both the internees themselves and their guards), of shipping space, and of propaganda opportunities for Goebbels, who naturally reacted with glee to this demonstration that the British too found it necessary to lock up German Jews in camps. Some of those interned had special skills which were thereby wasted. Ernst Stänger, a young art expert from Germany, had been entrusted with work of high national importance in 1939 when he helped to organize the concealment of treasures from the National Gallery in a wartime hideaway in Wales. Yet he was interned as an enemy alien in 1940, and deported; he retired recently as Professor of Art History at Harvard University. The young Hermann Bondi was arrested in Cambridge and deported to Canada, only later being permitted to return to England to help work on the perfection of radar.

What can be said in defence of an apparently absurd policy which (as we now know) did not net a single spy, while confusing and (although in remarkably few cases) embittering some of the Nazis' most determined enemies? First, it should be remembered that many other countries interned enemy aliens; France subsequently handed over many of its internees to the Nazis for transportation to Auschwitz; the United States interned thousands of its own citizens of Japanese origin. Moreover, once the panic eased in the autumn of 1940 the British Government quickly went into reverse and released most of the internees and allowed many of the deportees to return to Britain. Churchill himself (again like Henry II) relented and said that he had always thought the "Fifth Column danger . . . somewhat exaggerated in this Island".

The Gillmans' account of what they rightly term "a disreputable story" is admirably complete, though couched in what is sometimes (as the title of the book suggests) a rather breathless style. There are occasional minor errors (for example, it is wrongly suggested that Sir John Simon was Home Secretary in late 1916), but in its main elements the story as here recounted carries conviction.

This in spite of the fact that, as the authors complain, many (though not all) of the official documents relating to internment are still withheld by the government, well beyond the normal thirty-year limit. It is, however, a pity that the authors chose to finish the book with a postscript concerning the recent controversy over official secrets legislation and the Blunt affair—topics the relevance of which to the remainder of the book appears rather tenuous.

The atmosphere of that hot summer of 1940, in which as one wit put it "nothing alien was human", the public reaction against aliens is understandable. The official response was less excusable—though soon stood for as early as August 23, 1940, Sir John Anderson told the House of Commons that "most regrettable and deplorable things have happened". The most appropriate verdict on the whole business was perhaps that recorded by Eugen Spier, a German Jew resident in Britain since 1922, who was interned in 1939, deported to Canada in 1940, permitted to return to internment in the Isle of Man in 1941, and subsequently released. In his memoirs Spier noted his bemusement upon his arrival in London after a journey at official expense of 5,300 miles to find himself confronted with a Ministry of Information hoarding which inquired: "Is Your Journey Really Necessary?"

Boarding among the Bluecoats

By Vernon Scannell

PHILIP OAKES:
Middle England
A Memory of the Thirties
189pp. André Deutsch. £5.95.
0 233 97232 3

Are authors who have attempted to write autobiographical narratives well aware of the many problems the genre presents, problems of style and tone, of finding some means to avoid the pose either of mock-modest self-effacement or inflated self-aggrandizement that the use of the first person singular so pressingly imposes. Most imaginative writers of prose have found that the art of fiction enables them more comfortably to write about themselves and, indeed, the novelist will almost certainly reveal far more of his true nature in his stories than in an avowedly autobiographical piece of writing. Memoirs confined to childhood years are perhaps less difficult to handle objectively than the long-distance event from infancy to maturity or old age; but even so the author is prey to dangers, notably those of sentimentalizing, over-dramatizing or in some way falsifying the past.

Philip Oakes, in *From Middle England*, has adroitly steered around these pitfalls. He gives an account of three years of his life from the time in 1930 when he was sent away at the age of eight to a "boarding school". He was the only child of an invalid mother; his father had died when the boy was only four and his mother's physical condition was steadily deteriorating after a brain operation, until she, too, reached the point at which she was no longer able adequately to care for a one in his position. When the young Oakes was told that he was to be sent away from his home near Bursledon in the Potteries to a boarding-school his imagination was immediately exercised by visions of Billy Bunter and the rest of that fantastical company of public-school monsters of the Frank Richards stable. Middle-class boys of the 1930s, presented a realistic picture of life at an English public school. The humiliating shocks of first having to don the bizarre uniform of a Bluecoat Boy—cravat, blue coat with silver buttons, moleskin trousers and grey stockings—and then arriving at the Royal Orphanage School, Wolverhampton, were ones from which he recovered with a rapidity and comparative painlessness which say a good deal for his resilience at that time.

Philip Oakes's account of the school is beautifully persuasive. It was a pretty fearsome place in some respects—spartan conditions, strict discipline and frugal meals; a preposterous Headmaster and a staff which included some very odd and doubtfully proficient teachers—but it also had quite a lot to commend it and the author, who is entirely without retrospective self-pity, makes it clear that he found much there to enlist his affections and loyalty. The sketches of members of the staff are all drawn with economy and razor-sharp accuracy. Mr Smith, the games master, stupid and full of baffled aggression and prejudices of breath-stopping awfulness, who would not have been there had he not been first cousin to the Headmaster's wife, is yet able to engage the reader's sympathy; Mr Pope, the senior mathematics teacher who also taught boxing and once invited Ted "Kid" Lewis—former world-class professional welterweight—to visit the school and demonstrate his defensive skill to the boys, a scene which is at once funny and shrewdly revealing of the character of the old fighter; Mr Sleash, who taught art and woodwork and had been a sergeant in the Great War serving under the Headmaster who was then a major, an engaging eccentric possessing a kind of comic innocence and nobility; and Mr Gibbs, the Headmaster, absurd, pompously oratorical, yet, Oakes convinces us, in many ways an admirable and dedicated man.

All of these characters and the author's relatives and family friends whom we meet during the school holidays convince completely: their characteristics are always enacted, not merely described, so that the reader feels that he knows, not just about them, but knows them as people with whom he has been intimately associated.

The sense of period, too, is wonderfully well evoked. Again, Oakes does not generalize or moralize about the blood-chilling and ubiquitous anti-semitism that is encountered on almost every other page, and the sense of impending disaster, the distant drumming of the German war-machine and the tragic fiasco of the Munich crisis are presences that are the more disturbing for being experienced through the perplexed sensibilities of a prepubescent boy.

Philip Oakes is a poet and *From Middle England* contains the best kind of poetic prose, not the cidersh and roseate glow of verbal and rhythmic self-indulgence, but a precision and sharp-eyed focusing on the thing itself, a knack of conveying the emotion through the exact presentation of a particular object, event or spoken phrase.

Only once did I feel that his ear for the idiom of the 1930s had faltered. After the visit of the boxer, Kid Lewis, Mr Smith is the only person who is not impressed by the champion and not only because, as he puts it, "Mr Lewis is one of the chosen race. I don't think he'd deny that", but because he regards Lewis's demonstration of clever defensive ring-manoeuvres as unworthy of respect. He says to the boys in his class, "Take Dempsey. Take Schmeling. They're not bothered about their pretty faces. They don't waste time dodging all over the shop. They know what they have to do. Get in there and finish the other man off. That's what it's all about". The last sentence seems to me, in that context, to belong very much to the 1970s. But I am well aware that this is a pitfall criticism to make of a book that, besides presenting a fascinating segment of the social history of the 1930s, is continuously enjoyable, sharply observed, funny, tender and, in its closing pages dealing with the outbreak of war, tactfully and quietly unsentimentally moving.

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BODLEY HEAD

commentary

The 'ouses in-between

By J. M. Richards

A Revolution in London Housing
Heinz Gallery, 21 Portman Square

One useful contribution made by this exhibition (which runs until August 2) is to identify the individual architects who designed the earliest London County Council housing schemes, those embarked on immediately after the LCC replaced the old Metropolitan Board of Works in 1889. A Housing of the Working Classes Branch was set up in 1892 within the new council's architects' department. The hitherto anonymous architects who worked in it are here revealed as including a number of talented men who were more closely in touch with the architectural intelligentsia of their time than the conventional image of late Victorian municipal housing might suggest. Two of the architects responsible for the largest of the early schemes, the Boundary Street estate in Shoreditch (in which was accommodated half the total number of Londoners rehoused between 1894, when it was begun, and 1900) were Owen Fleming and C. C. Winmill. Both were devotees of Philip Webb, and Winmill had previously worked in Leonard Stokes's office.

Both, too, were socialist disciples of William Morris. Socialist idealism was an important constituent of early LCC housing policies, the first administration—the "Progressives"—being an alliance of liberals and Fabian socialists. The improvements they sought were in morals and hygiene as well as in accommodation, since a Royal Commission of 1884 had condemned the London slums as the worst there had ever been. Another aim was the reduction of crime. It is interesting that an occupational census taken in the Boundary Street estate, and displayed in the exhibition, shows the presence among the estate's first inhabitants of a surprisingly large number of policemen and clergymen.

The socialist allegiances among the young architects who joined the LCC at this time presents, incidentally, an interesting parallel with the allegiances of the young architects who flocked to the LCC to work under Robert Matthew after 1946. They, too, were motivated by political and social, as well as architectural, idealism, and were eager that new housing estates like Roehampton should meet the aspirations of a brave new post-war world.

The Heinz Gallery exhibition, as well as celebrating the beginning of LCC housing, is not far from marking its end. It coincides with a political process by which the LCC housing estates are one by one being handed over to the London boroughs. The next great estate to be built after Boundary Street, and another that remains nearly intact, was the Millbank estate (1897-1902; architect, R. Minton Taylor) and this has already been transferred to Westminster. The transfer of Boundary Street to Tower Hamlets has not yet been determined.

LCC housing can thus be described as an episode lasting just ninety years. This exhibition covers the first twenty-five—that is, up to 1913. High points of the story are the legislation of 1900, which allowed the LCC to acquire land outside its own boundaries and the building of the first cottage estates following the insistence by housing reformers that the London working man would be happier living in an individual house than in a flat. Outstanding among these estates is Totterdown Fields, Tooting, begun in 1903 and the only cottage estate finished before the 1914 war. It lay at the end of a main tram route, which was electrified at the same time as building work started; for the LCC wisely insisted that any policy of rehousing slum-dwellers at the edge of, or outside, its area should be accompanied by the extension of transport systems and the provision of cheap workmen's fares.

The exhibition has been organized by the Historic Buildings Division of the GLC. The material was chosen and annotated, with notable perception and scholarship, by Andrew Saint. A book by Susan Beattie, with the same title, is being published to coincide with it (and will be reviewed separately in a later TLS). The material of the exhibition consists almost wholly of original drawings—a refreshing change from the photographs on which so many architectural exhibitions rely—and unusually handsome many of the drawings are. They are functional not presentation drawings, yet are expressively coloured and reveal the stylistic proclivities of their newly identified authors, a lingering "Queen Anne" gable here, a hankering after art nouveau ornamentation there. They show remarkable variety in the architectural treatment, for this is an era that comes between the somewhat grim austerity of the philanthropic housing like Peabody's and the near-standardization of 1920s neo-Georgian.

The drawings are from GLC archives and seem to have been well looked after. An important question is what will happen to them, and the thousands more like them, now that GLC housing is being transferred to the London boroughs. The latter will need to consult the drawings of surviving housing schemes for technical purposes, but photo-copies will serve for this. The originals are valuable historic documents, but the many boroughs have well-organized archives and expert archivists to care for them and make them available to social and architectural historians. There will be relief if the GLC announces positive plans to safeguard their future.

Placing George Eliot

By Valentine Cunningham

Gratifyingly, the Common Reader was out in even greater force than were dons, literary journalists and other persons of letters last Saturday, midsummer day, as a memorial stone to George Eliot was unveiled in Westminster Abbey in the Centenary year of her death. At long last this English "provincial genius" has been granted a place of honour in Poet's Corner among those more cosmopolitan talents—Henry James, T. S. Eliot and W. H. Auden—that the nation (or the Dean and Chapter) has been prompter at acknowledging. And the belittled ladies of the George Eliot fellowship were down in churchanic strength from Nuneaton, Coventry, Bedworth, George Eliot's early stomping-grounds, to see justice finally done. Our first great cellibrant of ordinary midlands life, of the provincially plain middle—the great valuer, as the passage from *Amos Barton* that was read by her great-great nephew, Tenniel Evans, put it, of life seen through "dull grey eyes", of the "voice that speaks in quiet ordinary tones"—was being belatedly celebrated in the nation's centre and the midlands, Middlemarch, had rightly come to applaud.

What Middlemarch thought of the programme notes ("At her school in Coventry . . . her Warwickshire dialect was replaced by standard English; the Brayl is quickly cleared her of provincialism") is open to conjecture. Only guessable, too, is what the novelist herself would have thought. Johnny Cross, of course, who had married a national monument, wanted her monumentalized in the Abbey. Did she, though? "The price of wisdom is above rubies" (that passage from Job was read to us), and also above memorial stones. But Dorothea Brooke in the end wanted not merely dignified goodness but mamma's emeralds as well. And George Eliot probably did occasionally think of the Abbey as her proper reward.

Others did not. Gordon Haight, climaxing a life's work as the unveiler of George Eliot's life and letters by unveiling her memorial, reported in his address the absence of any letters from great contemporaries like Tennyson and Browning (soon to be in the Abbey themselves, of course) urging Dean Stanley to admit her. The main interest was adversary. T. H. Huxley, notorious agnostic, appears successfully to have urged on the Dean that the Abbey should not be a pantheon for a "notorious antagonist" to Christian marriage and dogma.

Un-Christian attitudes to marriage had not, as Gordon Haight shrewdly observed, hampered Abbey honours to the likes of Dickens. But George Eliot wasn't hypocritically coy about her twenty-four years of "virtuous crime" as Lewes's consort, nor shy in her persistent undoing of Christian thought.

Still, there's no need now to urge—as Professor Haight spiritedly did—that George Eliot was "almost" married and "almost a Christian". The Christian striker that's found room for the doubter and atheist, the adulterer and homosexual, has no arguments left for excluding from its precincts one of the finest moralists our fiction can show. D. H. Lawrence next?

Childless

While picking these blackberries
I think of the brilliant diseases
of horses.

I think of the roots of trees
turning away from light
into darkness, like hard lessons
in a foreign tongue.

Later, at the blue window,
I advance by inches towards October
The seabirds unwind their hooves
in the sky,

and the taste of blackberries
turns to evening,
long, equine, dark.

Penelope Shuttle

True grit

By Andrew Hislop

Courage Fuyons
Curzon

French cinema never seems to tire of the "bourgeois comedy" and French bourgeois comedy never seems to tire of adultery. Yves Robert, the director of *Pardon Mon Affaire* and *Pardon Mon Affaire Too*, offers us adultery yet again in *Courage Fuyons*. So certain is he of the resilience of the French bourgeoisie that he sets his new affaire at the moment when their values did seem seriously threatened —May '68; and he imbues his hero, Martin Belhomme (Jean Rochefort) with a quality particularly poignant in a class that has still not exorcized the stigmas of collaboration—cowardice. The film is produced by quotation from the novelist Jules Renard: "Listening only to courage, which said nothing to him, he was careful not to intervene".

Belhomme does intervene: it is the manner of his intervention that is cowardly. His moment of truth comes when he is forced to throw potatoes at his own car, in tactful sympathy with striking students, while his family look on aghast from their balcony. He flees to the station but a strike has stopped the trains. A student takes him to one of the revolutionary dormitories where he meets Eva (Catherine Deneuve), who is taken to the airport, with much temerity and little celerity, on the back of a borrowed motorbike. Smitten by a parting kiss, he follows her on the motorbike to an Amsterdam nightclub, where she sings "Show me your guts and grit . . . Fight where your weapons fit".

They have an affair. Belhomme pretends to be a writer (in fact he owns a chemist-shop). Eva is sure she has read his books which she does not like. Frightened off by the threats of an old lover of Eva's, Belhomme returns to Paris where he explains his absence by feigning amnesia. His wife takes advantage of his state by continuing to have an open affair with a doctor friend of theirs. Eventually she informs the doubting Belhomme weds Eva "only to discover that she has children by an American with whom she normally lives. Belhomme intervenes again to save their relationship. He becomes the American's chauffeur.

The couple triumphs in her intended role forever, that she has Eva's relationship is deserving but one qualms are eased by the narrative structure of the film. It opens not with Belhomme's life as a married chemist but with him dressed incongruously in leather on a motorbike, and with the object of his fantasy, Eva, clinging onto him as he takes her to an hotel for their first night of love. After Eva's refusal of Martin's limp offering of a pre-coital cigarette, they are about to indulge themselves when they hear a violent quarrel. Martin is sent to intervene but stops in the corridor. The film halts at this point of impotence and Martin narrates his cowardly history. This confession behind him, he now has enough guts and grit to hit the dwarf who was the victim of the woman in the quarrel and to make love to Eva. The rest of the plot then unfolds.

There are some very funny moments in the film, augmented at times by subtitles such as that which translates Martin's words of self-restraint as "I was bolted by myself". However, *Courage Fuyons* exudes self-satisfaction: it encourages identification with a weak coward because he can still get the woman of his dreams, just as the French *bourgeoisie* manage to get the goods despite little hue to get the goods despite little upheavals in the body politic.

IMAGINING AMERICA

America, as E. M. Forster usually find in it what we looked at America in Imagining America, Paul Binding's fantasy, a projection of man, is a 'voyage of discovery' the realization that there hoped for. Malcolm described it as a 'sharp' echoed by Francis praised the book as 'vivid with intellectual energy'

Imagining America
0 7100 0705

Routledge & Kegan Paul
39 Store Street, London

commentary

Taking off the Tories

By John Sutherland

A Short Sharp Shock
Theatre Royal, Stratford

The controversy accompanying this play is familiar. Tory backwoodsmen thunder (most loudly in the *Telegraph*) about the iniquity of state subsidy for socialist propaganda. The authors and director are given a sympathetic profile, long interview and flattering photograph in the *Guardian*. *Time Out* urges ignorance. In *The Times* Sir Roy Strong reiterates the Arts Council's "arm's length" policy: pre-censorship, even of communist agitprop, would be a communist practice, he loftily observes. Norman St. John-Stevas turns backbench wrath aside with the reminder that the Government doesn't tell the Council what to do with its £60m, any more than the Council tells the Theatre Royal what to do with its £121,000. (This, incidentally, is particularly sportive of the Minister for the Arts. On the play he's lampooned as the "bloat of the big spenders" and appears around in a plum-coloured velvet suit and opera cloak adorned with butterflies.)

The effect at the box office of all this storm in the British cultural teacup is predictable. On a normally quiet preview night, scores of disappointed theatre-goers were turned away into the unwelcoming backstreets of Stratford, E15. The member of the theatre's governing body who kindly gave up his seat when mine collapsed (the Theatre Royal sadly needs its imminent refurbishment) jestingly proposed adding a party contribution to Buddy Taylor by way of gratitude.

A Short Sharp Shock (formerly *Rock the Bitch*—but not even long-suffering Sir Roy Shaw would stand for that) is an offensive play in both the neutral and the pejorative senses of the term. At times the audience were perplexed in their responses; unsure whether to approve the attack on Toryism or be affronted at the assault on common decency. Airey Neave, who has a choric role, enters in scene eight for a bloodily dismembered limb and faintly observes, "Now I've got the ghost of Airey Neave". Three or four members of the audience cheered; most—in so far as a solid collective silence can be interpreted—were embarrassed.

In the same scene Mountbatten's limbs joins Neave, holding his (publically) dismembered limb (more minority cheering) to utter, among other out-of-character bellicosities, "The British dead in Ireland are the jewels in her crown". The authors balance this deliberately tasteless scene with one following in which a demented public-hole socialist, Old Man Yule, observes that in Northumberland working class martyrs have been roasted to death in candle-caused fires after their electricity was turned off by hard-hearted authorities. Do we need such human torches to light our way forward? he shouts at the audience. More silence.

The hiss-cheer response which the play's analysis of Thatcherite Toryism demands wasn't given—at least on the first night. Where the play does get a rise is in its political mimicry. The impersonation (by female players—an oddly undisturbing gimmick) is wonderfully evocative on the physical level and crudely hilarious on the ideological. A kilted, half-witted Douglas-Home ("he is a nice man who likes to kill little birds") puts Thorneycroft's chauffeur while conniving to knife Heath in the back ("a failed Tory is a leper"). "Loony" Keith Joseph enters accompanied by a male nurse; "It's not true that I want to gas people", he explains, "I just don't want the wrong people to get born".

Most of his entrances and exits are made, Dracula-style, from a grave and as the play progresses "loony" deteriorates into the self-flagellating Teiresias of the Cabinet ("Keith dear, don't neglect yourself"), murmurs the Leader, absent-mindedly picking at a hanging buttock). Howe trots boyishly around after the Leader with a yellow balloon, marked £, floating over his head. "Piggy Prior" carries a stuffed calf everywhere with him and takes phone calls from his wheelbarrow. In the night cabinet scene he is debagged, black-balled and forced to drink Nobel Prize-winners' semen for his U-turn and his loyalty to Ted ("I'll tell *The Guardian*", he wanly threatens). Willy Whitelaw, drunk and bonhomous, wets his trousers; "Just bash the unions", he tells the metaphorically wet Prior, "I'll look them up for you". Carrington sweeps in, preceded by a gipsy violinist, to dance a tango in his topee with Thatcher: "I don't want to go down in English history as the only Foreign Secretary to have ushered in a government of black Marxists", he later whimpers. Nott and Biffen, wearing elastian heads, are No. 10 bouncers and kick the teeth out of any Tory who writes disloyal things about the Leader.

Over all this Gwen Taylor's Mrs Thatcher presides, icily immaculate: "I sit here brightly while men smell, argue and feel dirty round me." England, she declares, "is my little shop".

As a politically toughened Faith Brown-Mike Yarwood *Mrs Wilson's Diary* performance the play works well. And it witnesses to the remarkable renaissance in satirical political impersonation which has taken place over the last twenty years since "The Establishment" broke with war-enforced British pieties. The cartoonist's traditional privileges are now shared with the dramatist and the public entertainer.

A Short Sharp Shock derives most of its success from the actors' creativity in evoking political figures by gesture, nuance or scurrilous allusion. The contribution of the dramatists, Howard Brenton and Tony Howard, is less clearly successful. The dramaturgy (so to dignify it) of *A Short Sharp Shock* is primitive. The *mise en scène* is substantially the same throughout; a harish stage littered with a few class-war emblems—a tank (authority), a pig (the people's totem), a stag (the aristocrat's totem). The assembled Tory party is represented by a washing-line of stuffed shirts. The workers' only item of furniture is a quarrelled-over television set. A dropped Citizen Kane poster of Thatcher and a Fiat "hand-built by robots" billboard represent the rest of the props.

Dramatizing Dickens

By Peter Keating

The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby
Aldwych

One of the most remarkable things about the RSC production of *Nicholas Nickleby* is how accurately it captures the spirit of early Dickens, or, rather, how uncannily it makes the experience of watching the play duplicate the experience of that even the novel's formlessness have been made, of course, but they seem only to reinforce the strengths and weaknesses of the original. The adaptation (by David Edgar) and the direction (by Trevor Nunn and John Caird) are true to Dickens that even the novels formlessness has been retained. The atmosphere is one of apparently uncontrollable imaginative ingenuity; weird character follows weird character; romantic sentimentality quickly gives way to political satire; conscience-stirring pathos tumbles easily into farcical comedy. The component parts can be shuffled and re-arranged without seriously altering the overall effect: some characters and scenes could be left out and no-one would notice. All moods and virtually all experiences are potential material for inclusion. Success depends almost entirely on the young Dickens's exuberant genius, and on the ability of the actors to reproduce that exuberance. From this point of view the RSC production is a triumph.

The whole of the performance takes place on a stage which is structured like the courtyard of an eighteenth-century coaching inn, with rickety wooden balconies high above the stage and a platform stretching out into the audience: this is used for dramatic exits and to evoke a Dickensian confendiality between actors and audience. The complicated, rambling story-line is retained, though the temptation to cut or simplify must have been enormous. Sometimes the whole company joins together in a choral narrative, the story being passed swiftly from voice to voice; more often (and more discontinuously at times) individual characters break into a third-person narrative, talking directly to the audience about themselves.

Simple props and changes of lighting are used to focus attention on the sharply-defined individuality of the characters. It is rather like an old-fashioned pageant or a music-hall programme: in academic terms this is Chesterton's Dickens rather than J. Hillis Miller's, a world in which unifying themes and concerns are obviously present but offered as though they are incidental to the main purpose of celebrating the variety, eccentricity, and fundamental goodness of life. The Regency bucks, blustering politicians, and financial swindlers, convey little sense of real social power simply because the restless movement of the play forces them to take their places in an endless line of eccentrics, all of whom are competing for attention when their moment, their scene or spot, comes up. And the competition is intense.

There is John McEnery's rather seamy Mr Mantalini; Bob Peck's bluff, tender-hearted John Browdie; the Crummles's theatrical troupe, with Lila Kaye giving a majestic, dominating performance as Mrs Crummles, and Julie Peasgood as The Infant Phenomenon whirling about the stage in a demonic and wordless frenzy. It is a play that is constantly demanding virtuoso performances. Suzanne Bertish, especially, brings to her portrayal of Fanny Squeers a coarse savagery that surely goes beyond anything indicated by Dickens, while the tea-party scene at Dotheboys Hall in which she vies with Tilda Price for the attention of Nicholas is an outstanding example of a type of social comedy that runs throughout the play, obliterating the cruder moments of direct social comment.

The performances of Nicholas Nickleby and his sister Kate follow faithfully the pattern set by Dickens: they are young, naive, and win through without any observable change in their personalities. But the character of their Uncle Ralph has been changed in a particularly interesting way. All of the melodrama and most of the conspicuous evil has been removed from him, and John Woodvine gives a deliberately subdued interpretation, presenting Ralph Nickleby for most of the time as a fairly ordinary, if exceptionally cynical and miserly, financial speculator. This makes his sudden remorse easier to understand, though his treatment of Kate seems more outrageous.

Chronologically the play is uncomplicated. It has a prelude set in the false dawn of Heath's defeat: "In 1974 we all had hope—even in Harold Wilson". The rest of the action deals with the Thatcher years, "the new age of self-interest". There are two sets of characters, "The Government" and "The Governed". The governed, although all varieties of socialists, are chronically divided against themselves. Old Man Yule is an aristocratical, methodistical, Newcastle radical. His daughter Jean (a realistically portrayed character) migrates to London for a good time, ends up in a bedsitter a glum wife and mother, and is converted to feminist Marxism. Her husband, Pipkin, defects from his class to become an entrepreneur breeding alsatian dogs for the protection of the nervous bourgeoisie. Bankrupted by excessive VAT demands he returns to the fold together—the play optimistically implies—with the other 41 per cent of the voters under forty-five who voted for Mrs Thatcher. Arthur, emblematic of the middle-aged governed, declines into drunkenness and left wing despair. He lurches unsteadily from the Labour to the Ecology to the Communist Party and finally becomes an anarchist. On a Blair Peach protest march he's beaten up by the SPG, then kicked out of hospital, intravenous tubes dangling, when cuts close his ward. His wife Milly (like Jean, realistically portrayed) achieves in tactics, not principles. She does committee work for Tony Benn.

At the end of the play we are to understand that Mrs Thatcher's ice-age politics have been beneficial. They have destroyed consensus. They have reunited "the mad socialist extended family". A new broad front has been forged with which to smash the Tories. Infantile disorder, as someone would have said.

If the personal manifestation of evil is played down in this production, the human degradation it creates is held constantly in mind by David Threlfall's superb portrayal of Smike. Beaten to a state of near senselessness by a Wackford Squeers who is much too funny for his villainous role—Smike gives the impression of being present on the stage almost as permanently as Nicholas Nickleby himself. His twisted body, starling eyes, and painful efforts to express his gratitude provide a crucial element of dramatic stability that holds in check what might otherwise have become merely a picaresque romp. He is supported in this function by Newman Wogge, another victim of financial greed and human indifference, movingly portrayed by Edward Petherbridge as a man who has been beaten down without losing his grip on the virtues and values of the true gentleman.

Given the shapelessness of *Nicholas Nickleby*, there is no convincing reason why, long as it is, it shouldn't be twice as long, or half or a third or a quarter as long, or any length that artistic ingenuity can maintain and the reader's patience endure. Most modern readers would not wish the novel longer than it is, and much the same must be said of the RSC production. It is divided into two parts, which can be seen separately or taken together at one sitting. The whole performance lasts for eight and a half hours and intervals are grudgingly given.

In view of the popularity of the Tate Gallery's Salvador Dali exhibition (over 100,000 people visited it during the first three weeks) the closing date has been postponed until Sunday, July 13.

Oxford University Press

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'Carl Degler's *At Odds* is easily the most perceptive, the most thoughtful, the most balanced and the most readable work that has ever been written on the evolution of the American family from the 18th through the 20th century.' Lawrence Stone, the *New York Times Book Review*. £12.50

to the editor

Gurdjieff

Sir,—In a notice of three books reviewing the person and ideas of George Gurdjieff (June 13), Graham Hough states that no "real record of Gurdjieff's] dance or music survives". There is indeed an archive of both, excellent dance-films supervised by Madame Jeanne de Salzmann, with music by Thomas de Hartmann, which is also available on discs, as well as recordings of Gurdjieff playing his portative harmonium. In Peter Brook's recent film based on portions of Gurdjieff's *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, now on general release, some half-dozen dances beautifully performed and photographed were produced in England. While the purpose of these dances is didactic rather than spectacular, the quality of movement, the complexity of choreography and the firmness of execution are thrilling.

Mr Hough castigates Gurdjieff as a "shaman", and it is true that many ideas emanating from Russia just prior to 1914 derived from anthropological research through Central Asia. In 1912, under the sponsorship of Diaghilev, Stravinsky was composing *Le Sacre du Printemps* for Nijinsky, with scenery and costumes by Nicholas Roerich, a serious artist who had travelled extensively in shaman-influenced areas. The ballet itself was a series of synthetic shamanistic rites. Madame Blavatsky may or may not have "studied" in Tibet, but she was a pioneer in bringing Eastern concepts to the West. Gurdjieff's instruction in the 1920s anticipated much popular quasi-oriental borrowings later popularized in the 1950s and 1960s. Diaghilev, having seen a demonstration of Gurdjieff's dance-exercises, suggested they be included as a novelty in one of the Ballets Russes seasons, much as he introduced authentic flamenco dancers trained by Picasso. Earlier he had proposed a pageant for Massine using icons and ritual from the Orthodox Church, to be called "Liturgie", but Stravinsky would have none of it, since he considered the Mass a sacrament rather than a show.

When Gurdjieff is dismissed as a charlatan, one recalls one of the dervish disciplines called *malamat*, a self-saving device using active irritation and repulsion. He was a genius of positive and negative energy; his attraction for many lay in the calibration of these forces. He began as an Orthodox seminarian and was buried from the Russian Church in Paris. A study of him, *In the Light of Tradition*, by Whitall N. Perry, first appeared in Studies in Comparative Religion, and is now in paperback (Perennial Books, 1978). It goes some distance towards making his progress and process relatively logical.

I first met Gurdjieff in Fontainebleau in July, 1922, and had some contact with him both in Paris and New York. When journalists asked what he was, he sometimes answered, "I'm a teacher of dancing", an still his student. For whatever it's worth, work done with George Balanchine since 1933, so far as my part goes, was determined by what I gained from Gurdjieff's notions of conscious behaviour and physical possibility.

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN.

New York City Ballet, State Theater, Lincoln Center, New York, NY 10023.

'Paths of Glory'

Sir,—In his review of Robert Philip Kolker's *A Cinema of Loneliness* (May 30) Nick Roddick tells us that, reworking earlier films becomes for a modern director a way of reworking historical myths: Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*, Kolker points out, is essentially similar to Ford's *Fort Apache*, but without the latter's reassuring epilogue.

These are films whose respective historical references are Custer's Last Stand and the French army mutinies in the First World War. Both films, admittedly, show soldiers massacred by the stupidity of their commanders, but in Stanley Kubrick's film the issue is not military incompetence but military justice, so-called. It would make as much sense to describe *Fort Apache* as a reworking of *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. If that is what reading "the key texts of modernist criticism" teaches us, I will stick with old-fashioned journalists like Otis Ferguson and Dwight Macdonald.

Paths of Glory is based of course on Humphrey Cobb's novel of the same title, and the adaptation owes more to Cobb than those who hail Kubrick as an *auteur* perhaps realize. Kubrick, however, tacked on an ironical-sentimental epilogue—not a "reassuring" one, certainly, but easier on the audience than ending where the book does, with the condemned soldiers receiving the *coup de grâce*.

Cobb's fine novel resurfaced briefly in paperback twenty years or so ago, and it is time it was available again, even if they have to promote it as "the book of the film".

GEOFFREY MINISH.

133 rue St Dominique, 75007 Paris.

'Ghetto' Criticism

Sir,—For years I have delighted in the wise, witty, and sometimes whinnigly eccentric views expressed in your "to the editor" pages, but I have never imagined that the opinions of your correspondents reflected official *TLS* attitudes. Apparently, however, the distinction between letters signed and editorials is not universally recognized. I am bemused to find the following sentence in Hermione Lee's essay about American periodicals (June 6): "'Literature' is sacrificed . . . to what the January *PMLA* calls 'ghetto' criticism ('women's literature must properly be written, criticized, and taught by women, Jewish literature by Jews, black literature by blacks, and so forth'). . . ." Since Ms Lee refers to my editor's column in her article, readers (and several have already called me) may well think that *PMLA* is taking a stand on, or even prescribing, "ghetto" criticism. Not so. The passage quoted is, in fact, excerpted from a letter published in our own "Forum" section, a letter that faults the idea that only women should write about women, etc. One would never guess this from Ms Lee's curious phrasing.

Let me add, though, that apart from this regrettable lapse the several essays on literary magazines seem to me accurate and well written. I especially admire Pat Rogers's words about my favourite journal: "I am prepared to number [*PMLA*] among the best. . . ."

JOEL CONARROE.

PMLA, The Modern Language Association of America, 62 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

'Eighteenth-Century Studies'

Sir,—Though we appreciate the generous comments made by Pat Rogers about *Eighteenth-Century Studies* in his review of scholarly periodicals (June 6), there are one or two clarifications that must be made for the benefit of your readers.

Mr Rogers avers that "the financial subsidy of the ASECS [toward the publication of ECS] seems to be relatively small". The published Treasurer's Report, to which he refers states, on the contrary, that roughly one-quarter of our annual budget goes to the editing, printing, and distribution of *Eighteenth-Century Studies*. This amounts to about $35,000 per year; I am unsure to what his adverb "relatively" refers, but we think our subsidy "relatively" substantial. We do take pride, on the other hand, that there is so little "institutional smelliness" despite this large subsidy.

Also, the address for subscription information to which your readers are referred is two years out of date. The executive office of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies has been at The Ohio State University since mid-1978. The correct address for inquiries about ASECS membership and subscriptions to ECS is: American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, c/o Ronald C. Rosbottom, Executive Secretary, 141 Downey Hall, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH 43210, USA.

RONALD C. ROSBOTTOM.

'The Letters of William Hazlitt'

Sir,—David Bromwich in his original review of *The Letters of William Hazlitt* asserted that "much of Hazlitt's punctuation has been altered to accord with modern practice". He then emphasized that such "repunctuation" is not merely "disconcerting" but "in some cases palpably distorts Hazlitt's meaning". I replied (Letters, April 11) that this charge against the integrity of Hazlitt's text, of the editors' allegedly systematic alteration of Hazlitt's textual punctuation to accord with some unspecified "modern practice", was both "gratuitous" and "wanton" as criticism and without evident basis in fact. Mr Bromwich replied (April 18) evasively and irrelevantly. He professed to believe that I had asked for scrappy bits of evidence for any possible "misprints or misstranscriptions" that might be found somewhere in the volume. He thus compounded the error of his original misrepresentation by resorting to a trivial question never asked, a tactic enabling him to evade scholarly responsibility for his seriously misleading statements.

GERALD LAHEY.

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'The Brethren'

Sir,—Janet Morgan's review (April 11) of *The Brethren* by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong rightly criticizes the authors for spreading gossip and innuendo. But the review insinuates a few errors of its own—not the least by its headline, "Eleven just men". That implies the existence of two more United States Supreme Court justices than there are. Ms Morgan also takes the authors to task for getting wrong the details of an incident involving William O. Douglas and Justice Blackmun. In doing so, she gets wrong another detail: it's *Harry* Blackmun, not Harold.

More importantly, the reviewer errs in accepting as a serious allegation the authors' statement that Chief Justice Burger sometimes changes his vote on cases in order to exercise the Chief's prerogative of writing the opinion or choosing the writer when he is in the majority. It is, in fact, a customary practice among Chief Justices, and only those unfamiliar with the court's workings were at all surprised by that supposed revelation of *The Brethren*. Even Associate Justices may change their vote at times to gain influence over the tenor of the majority opinion. The practice proves only that the court, like the other organs of American government, has an internal political system in which it is sometimes shrewd to join the opposition if you cannot beat them.

R. V. DENENBERG.

Box 308, R.D. 1, Red Hook, New York 12571.

Book Collector's Directory

Sir,—Every three years we compile the International Directory of Book Collectors. This comprises a listing of book collectors, worldwide, who need catalogues from second-hand and antiquarian booksellers. Each entry carries the collector's name, address and collecting interests.

May we offer your book collecting readers an entry in the third, forthcoming, edition (1981-83)? There is, of course, no charge for this listing. We will be going to press in September, 1980, and publication is scheduled for early 1981.

JUDITH SHEPPARD.

Trigon Press, 117 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JJ.

Peter Brook's film *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, (see letter about Gurdjieff on this page) returned to London yesterday as the Minerva Cinema in Knightsbridge. It stars Dragan Maksimovic, Mikica Dimi, Terence Stamp, Athol Fugard and Gerry Sundquist.

Among this week's contributors

JULIA ANNAS is the translator and editor of *Aristotle's Metaphysics: Books M and N*, 1977.

SIR ROBERT BIRLEY was Assistant Master at Eton from 1926 to 1935 and Headmaster there from 1949 to 1963.

LORD BLAKE will be taking over the editorship of the *Dictionary of National Biography* later this year.

ANITA BROOKNER's books include *The Genius of the Future: Studies in French Art Criticism*, 1971, and *Greuze*, 1972.

ANTHONY BURGESS's musical works include *Mr W. S.—A Ballet*, which was broadcast last November on BBC Radio 3.

L. JONATHAN COHEN is the author of *The Probable and The Provable*, 1977.

VALENTINE CUNNINGHAM is the editor of *The Penguin Book of Spanish Civil War Verse*, which was published earlier this year.

DAVID DAICHES's books include *Scotland and the Union*, 1977, and *Edinburgh*, 1978.

DICK DAVIS's second book of poems, *Seeing the World*, has just been published.

DENNIS DUNCANSON is Reader in Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Kent.

C. J. DUNN is Professor of Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

DAVID HAWKES is a Research Fellow at All Souls' College, Oxford.

ERIC HOBSBAWM is Professor of Economic and Social History at Birkbeck College, London.

MICHEL JOBERT was the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, 1973-1974.

PETER KEATING is the author of *The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction*, 1971, and editor of *Into Unknown England*, 1977.

A. J. KRAILSHEIMER has recently published *Pascal* in the Oxford Past Master series.

A. A. LONG is the author of *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 1974.

COLIN MCGINN is a Lecturer in Philosophy at University College London.

SIR JAMES RICHARDS's autobiography *Memoirs of an Unjust Fella* was published earlier this year.

GABRIEL SALGADO is the author of *The Elizabethan Underworld*, 1977.

VIRGINIA SAPIRO is Assistant Professor of Political Science and Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin.

VERNON SCANNELL's *Collected Poems* have just been published.

DAVID SIBD is a Lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool.

ANDREW SINCLAIR's novel *The Facts in the Case of E. A. Poe* was published last year.

GEORGE STEINER's books include *Heidegger* and *On Difficulty*, both published in 1978.

STEPHEN STICH is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Maryland.

JOHN SUTHERLAND is the author of *Victorian Novelists and Publishers*, 1976, and *Fiction and the Fiction Industry*, 1978.

E. S. TURNER's books include *Amazing Grace*, 1975.

BERNARD WASSERSTEIN is the author of *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945*, 1978, and *The British in Palestine: the mandatory government and the Arab-Jewish conflict, 1917-1929*, 1980.

AARON WILDAVSKY is Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, July 18. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, P.O. Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of July 25.

Competition No 28

All three passages are translations

1 Le cochon était dans une brouette, muet, Il posait, disait-on, le poids de trois hommes. Les yeux fermés, les paupières d'un blanc rose. Les pieds tendus et raides.

2 Plus tard—de vrais culs de bouteilles mes carreaux— Le mal, c'est ça qui m'emballait: Moi et ma capa et mes crocs, On a passé des nuits, c'était saignant et dingue. Les femmes, je les massais avec mon sexe, Je les éclatais comme des meringues.

3 Le mot d'un escargot sur l'assiette d'une feuille à Ce n'est pas ça, moi. Ne l'accepte pas. De l'acide acétique dans une boîte hermétique ? Ne l'accepte pas, Ce n'est pas authentique. Un auneau d'or et le soleil dedans ? Mensonges, Mensonges et chagrin.

Results of Competition No. 25. There were no winners this time.

1 My one fear was that the blasting roar of depression would return—the surest way, of course, to bring it. I lay awake till dawn, breathing quickly and sweating lightly, beneath what De Quincey inadequately describes as the oppression of inexplicable guilt. Now as soon as the lovely day had broken, I fell into the most terrible of all dreams—that joyous one in which all past evil has not only been wiped out of our lives, but has never been committed; and in the very bliss of our assured innocence, before our loves shriek at the change countenance, we wake to the day we have earned.

Kipling, "The House Surgeon".

2 It was utterly wonderful to find that I could go so heartily and headily mad; for you know I had been priding myself on my prudent sanity! And it was more wonderful yet to find the madness up, like things so dreadful, out of things so trivial. One of the most prevailing and disagreeable of the spectres developed out of the firelight on my mahogany bed-post; and my fear for all futurity, seemed commonly to turn on the humour of dark personages who were mysteriously pent in the stains of damp on the ceiling.

Ruskin, letter to Crivelli.

3 O Britain, infamous for suicide! An island in thy manners! disjoin'd From the whole world of rational beside Wash the dire strain nor shock the continent. . . .

Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*.

The exhibition of Japanese graphic art, "Japanese Prints: 300 Years of Books and Albums", which is currently on show at the British Museum (until October 5), consists of a display of Japanese woodcut prints taken from books and albums, many of which are shown for the first time. Among the 350 items which date from the seventeenth century to the twentieth, are illustrations from Utamaro's *Bird Book* and *Shell Book* and Hokusai's *Manga* and *100 Views of Fuji*, works which had a great influence on late nineteenth-century Western painting.

Gentility comes to Scotland

By David Daiches

Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait

Gars ony dress look weel,
"Decent and genteel"? One could write a whole essay on Burns and gentility.

Mr Crawford sees all this and declines to look into it. "Much Scottish art-song", he writes,

> was in a folk or even a broadside tradition, and the fashion of writing new words, Scots or English, to old tunes . . . inevitably blurred these differences. The distinction that is of the greatest value in the study of Scottish song literature before and immediately after Burns's time is the distinction between popular and artificial. By artificial song I mean a particularly insipid variety, often sung by professional singers at the public gardens of Ranelagh and Vauxhall, and at their northern counterparts in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Such *artificial* songs were a peculiar sub-class of art-song, by no means identical with the whole of art-song; they were associated with a particular social group, the "polite", and above all with the women of that group; and their ideo-content was often that of the mid-eighteenth-century cult of sentiment.

This is true and important. But the adoption in Scotland of an idiom heard at Ranelagh and Vauxhall represents a cultural phenomenon quite different from anything found in London. Genteel sentimentality in both language and feeling may have been a pan-British phenomenon but its appearance in Scotland had special causes and a special cultural significance.

Alexander Robertson of Struan's "Pinkie's Ode upon Celestia bathing in the Seine", which Mr Crawford quotes, is modelled on the late seventeenth-century lyric style which is quite different from the "genteel" style of so many eighteenth-century Scottish songs, including many by Ramsay and others providing new words to old folk tunes. This is simply a case of a Scottish poet imitating an English mode, or, one might say, acting British. Ramsay himself, of course, about whom Mr Crawford has some illuminating things to say and about whose *Gentle Shepherd* he has a notable chapter, had a mixed motivation: he was both collector, preserver and imitator of older Scottish popular modes and "improver" of popular songs by rewriting them in the English idiom of sentimental gentility that was in some measure the idiom adopted by some Scottish poets as a substitute for the lost Scots courtly style. One can compare the old folk verses (in Scots) printed by David Herd that went to the tune "Tweedside" with Ramsay's lines ("What beauties does Flora disclose?") to the same tune, or indeed different sets of verses by Ramsay himself. The coexistence of such disparate styles is duly noted by Mr Crawford, who gives many examples. But what is going on socially, culturally, psychologically, nationally, that might help to explain this? The debate about the language of pastoral in France and England is important, and it is relevant to the language of *The Gentle Shepherd* as Mr Crawford persuasively argues; but there is a national (even a political) dimension in the Scots poet's use both of Scots dialect and of a genteel English idiom that differentiates the Scottish situation.

In his interesting chapter on "Love and Marriage" Mr Crawford might have considered what happened to "Auld Lang Syne" in Ramsay's version. This was a poem, perhaps by Sir Robert Ayton, which appeared in Watson's 1711 volume as something clearly rooted in the Cavalier tradition (the last stanza is reminiscent of Lovelace) but which probably had a folk origin. Ramsay's version moves it from the courtly to the genteel. It ends with this stanza:

> The hero, pleas'd with the sweet air,
> And signs of gen'rous love,
> Which had been utter'd by the fair,
> Bow'd to the powers above:
> Nest day, with consent and glad haste,
> Th' approach'd the sacred shrine;
> Where the good priest the couple blest,
> And put them out of pine.

Burns in his turn was to restore the poem to the folk tradition. There is a whole history of the movement from folk to courtly to genteel and then back to folk in the extant versions of this poem.

This is not to deny the point that there was a turn to folk-song and imitated folk-song in some quite sophisticated quarters to find a substitute for the lost court-song, while court-song itself sometimes descended to the folk to re-emerge in somewhat different guise as a kind of folk-song—these are important considerations acting on the style and language of the Scottish song lyric well before the Union. The Union emphasized and in some respects exacerbated problems that had been developing for well over a century. It sent poets and editors imitating and collecting and "improving" Scottish songs in an endeavour to assert and perpetuate a native song tradition, and it is difficult to see how Watson's *Choice Collection* or Ramsay's *Tea-Table Miscellany* could have come into existence except as a direct or indirect response to it. At the same time, a sense of the loss of a standard of elegance and refinement resulting from the disappearance of the Scots courtly tradition led to a search for new (inevitably English) models of what might be called gentility that is characteristic of Scottish and not of English poetry.

The modulation of English poetic idiom from the Jonsonian through the Cavalier to the Restoration and on to the eighteenth century is easy to follow. There was no comparable modulation in Scotland, no natural movement from courtliness to gentility. Gentility in Scotland was *willed*, deliberately sought for as a substitute for a lost courtliness and indeed a lost literary language. Mr Crawford uses phrases such as "refined taste", "drawing-room wagers", "tea-table clichés", "artificial compliment", "artificial and sentimental", as though we all know what is meant. But, however comparable to or even identical with English poetic idiom some eighteenth-century Scottish poetic idioms are, and however close a connection we can see between some of the consciously refined poems in the *Tea-Table Miscellanies* and some English poems (and indeed there are actually some English poems in that collection), the cultural forces at work are different. When eighteenth-century Scots cultivated the language of "refined taste" in their songs they were seeking a British solution to a Scottish national problem, and no English poet did that. And, I would maintain, one can *hear* the Scottish poets doing it.

Mr Crawford eschews any facile nationalism. He is at pains to show, correspondences and continuities between the Scottish and the English song traditions at all levels. He is partly his awareness of these correspondences and continuities that leads him to reject what he calls a historical Myth—that the Scottish consciousness was divided cleanly split by the Union with English, but it is true that stated thus baldly this is, if not a myth, an oversimplification.

The problem of which language a poet should use first became serious in Scotland after the departure of the court for England in 1603. The disappearance of court patronage of poetry and music and the disappearance of a courtly standard of elegance and sophistication built in Scots poetic idiom and in Scots writing for voices or instruments, or both, traditionally known in Scotland as *musik fyne*; the fact that the Reformation in Scotland turned the people towards an English Bible and towards a somewhat old-fashioned formal English as the language of devotion and edification; the fact that the Reformation turned against traditional folk culture and their accompanying song culture, while at the same time

A paperback edition of *Benjamin Britten 1913-1976: Pictures from a Life*, compiled by Donald Mitchell with the assistance of John Evans, has recently been published (Unwin Paperbacks, pbks, Faber and Faber. £4.95. 0 571 11261 7). There are four hundred photographs reproduced in this book, including some of major discoveries, such as the pictures (not previously available) of the years Britten spent in the United States from 1939 to 1942. The period of the 1930s is exceptionally well treated. The captions to the pictures are extensive, based on original research, and there is also a comprehensive chronological table recording the principal events in Britten's life, together with a complete list of his works.

Tunes and treadles

By Anthony Burgess

ROGER ELBOURNE:
Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840
177pp. Ipswich: Boydell and Brewer. £10.
0 85991 060 1

The cover of Roger Elbourne's *Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840* reproduces an illustration from Thomas Newbiggin's *Lancashire Humours*. It shows Old Bob o' t' Carr (or alternatively o' t' Deighn) and his son James, both in their nightshirts, the one playing the violin, the other the cello. The grandfather clock shows five past three in the morning. The two had been working on a new piece until midnight, had failed to master its difficulties, and been dragged out of bed by a perfectionism not rare in that region, those times, that milieu. Old Bob, or Robert Ashworth, was a Lancashire composer born in 1798, one of the Larks of Dean, or Deighn Layrocks, a fraternity of humble workers who lived for music. James Ashworth, Robert's father, a composer living at Moss Barn, carried his own father, who was blind, a mile on his back to hear the *Messiah*. There is the story of the man who walked forty miles and back to Manchester just to look at the score of Handel's *Solomon*. The Lancashire Chorus, engaged to sing at a festival in Newcastle, set off walking on Sunday, arrived at their destination on Wednesday afternoon and at once, in St Nicholas's, began to sing *Israel in Egypt*.

The devotion of the Lancashire North to music blossomed, as the world knows, in highly sophisticated forms, but much of the strength of the tradition derived from an admirable capacity for reconciling folk song and dance with the musical art heard in the new industrial conurbations. There is, of course, a link between Handel and Methodist chapel-singing, the formation of disciplined choirs, the sacred baroque represent one side of the story; the other side shows the continuation of a virile demotic rural tradition which the life of the million could not quell. James Reeves's anthology *The Everlasting Circle* presents folk songs whose highly erotic content finds vegetative symbolism. The cotton workers were quick to adapt the new technology to a vocabulary of poeticized sex:

> The cord of my lam jacks and treadles at length they began to give way.
> The bobbin I had in my shuttle, the weft in it no longer would stay.
> Her lathe it went bang to and fro, my main treadle it still kept in tune.

My pickers went nickety-nack all the time I was reiving her loom.

Meanwhile the instruments of art music—like the fiddles of Bob and James Ashworth—were serving a local secular end, where voices raised in hymn and oratorio were ready to be fuelled by ale in the sodality of the mixed outing.

The view that music, choral or instrumental, was a tranquilliser forced on to cotton operatives and mineworkers to muffle the hardships which might else foment revolution is too easy and doctrinaire to be acceptable. Before the weavers worked in the mills, while they did their piecework at home in their own time, there was poverty enough but also freedom: the long Muggle's remedy. Mr Elbourne's book is a useful beginning to a long and fascinating study.

Mr Crawford demonstrates in chapter after chapter, that the themes, motifs and attitudes revealed in much Scottish song "were not on the whole specifically or uniquely Scottish" but were international. Has anyone denied this? The Scottish dimension lies in the varieties of language used and in the association of different kinds of attitude with different kinds of language. Popular and art forms were of course different from each other in England too, but in England there was no dimension of a national dilemma. Mr Crawford sees no such dilemma. That is where we differ.

He also sees and says much that one must consider admirable whatever view one holds on this question. He is well aware, for example, of the interaction between popular tradition and upper-class individual talent" and illustrates it well. He examines the place of love, work, sex and drink in the song lyric, he investigates the broadside mode, illustrates and discusses "action lyrics" and the whole is admirable concluding discussion of Burns's "Love and Liberty" (generally known as "The Jolly Beggars"). He writes in a mood of scholarly enthusiasm and praises whenever he can and where many would not. Discussing "The Pennicuick Song" he says that its chorus "almost sings itself":

> Come sit thou down my Nunse
> Thou art my only fancy
> The Lily Rose thy cheeks compose
> And thy breath's sweet like a Tansy.

I cannot see how anyone could readily say, let alone sing, "thy breath's sweet". He cites the following as "a marvellous couplet" from *The Gentle Shepherd*: "My flute's be your's, and she too that's see nice/Shall come a will, gif ye'll tak my advice."

One tends to trust Mr Crawford's scholarship rather more than his judgment. The scholarship is indeed impressive. He has searched books and broadsides and manuscripts with dedicated zeal and an unerring, describing and interpreting what he has found he has broken new ground in Scottish studies. This book puts us all in his debt not least because it suggests grounds for fruitful further argument.

Delving into dustbins

By Aaron Wildavsky

MICHAEL THOMPSON :
Rubbish Theory
The Creation and Destruction of Value
228pp. Oxford University Press. £7.50.
0 19 217658 7

At bottom there are only two possible subjects for social science —stability and change. Since it takes a great deal of change to maintain stability, and change cannot continue without stability, social science is always in danger of swallowing its subject-matter. Michael Thompson's seminal study of *Rubbish Theory* is a heroic effort to take a stance outside society just long enough for the subject to stop chasing its tail.

Suppose society as an endless *roman à clef*: only we who are wheeling around in it cannot tell the names and occupations of the role players. Direct sense perception is self-stultifying, the solution being the problem. Indirect evidence is avidly sought. If cultures cohere, societies must make sense if only we knew where or how to look. Social science is nothing so much as a search through the interior of society for codes to unlock culture, the values and beliefs which correspond to a specific set of social relations. It is twenty-questions time; the object is ourselves and all we have to go on are the things we leave behind.

The only difference in subject between Thompson, the anthropologist, and contemporary archaeologists is that he lets us look at the creation of value while it is being destroyed. Unlike these anthropologists who are concerned to protect their favourite "little people", carefully isolating them as belonging to another and different category, remoter in conception than in time or place, Thompson claims we also have cultures, subject to the same constraints and opportunities as the others, except that, on the surface, our artifacts are different. Culture, he contends, is not just something that happens to us, but something we construct together, though the people involved may, as usual, be the last to know. Where better, then, to examine ourselves than in our leavings; where better to ask why some things are and remain trashy while others, like the stone that was rejected, become cornerstones of new values ?

If culture is everywhere, there for the conceiving, the more mundane the object the better. Junk is suitable. Perhaps if we could understand why so many things mother threw away are now collector's items, or why yesterday's slum is suitable only for today's gentry, we would also understand how social preferences ebb and flow, thus creating a keyhole, however small, into the unkempt cupboard in which the secrets of culture are kept.

Through it all, if one listens carefully, is the language of the rejected who are to rise again. Would not it be wonderful if the despised object, idea, person, or group—the rubbish heaps of society, were to turn out to be its transformers: containing within their collective corpus the seeds of future regeneration ? If what goes down can also come up in the world, all of a sudden, like falling up a social cliff, Thompson offers sympathetic readers a message of hope and cheer. On what new thing is his optimism based ? Rubbish.

In the beginning there were only two categories of objects, durable and transient, permanently increasing in value or already in a slow state of decline. Though there are extreme physical limits beyond which some things crumble and others last if left alone, these categories are socially defined. Neither objects, nor ideas, nor people, with in broad limits, are intrinsically valuable or valueless. These categories are a hardy but mutable part of a social process through which power relations are established and manipulated. As Thompson says, objects have the qualities that they have as the result of a social process of endowment. It follows that the same forces that confer these qualities may, in changed social circumstances, withdraw them. Society given and society taken away, and, in the act of giving and taking away, society is itself changed. . . .

If people and processes at the top do the classifying, controlling the mechanism for defining categories, why isn't this system self-perpetuating ? How, if ever, is classification altered ? No matter how tight the compartments of culture, Thompson argues, there are always borderline cases. Just as anyone who studies a staid subject learns that the behaviours considered improper are the best clue to what most people do, Thompson theorizes that change in the valuation of objects takes place through a third category of zero and timeless worthlessness, namely, rubbish. Treated as taboo, an object of disgust and repulsion, rubbish precisely because it is despised, exactly because it is unmentionable in polite society tend hence constitutes a covert category), provides a path to conduct change.

My hypothesis [Thompson writes] is that this covert rubbish category is not subject to the controls mechanism (which is concerned primarily with the overt part of the system, the valuable and socially significant objects) and so is able to provide the path for the seemingly impossible transfer of an object from transience to durability. . . .

This social malleability is apparent even when we examine the hard-core rubbish of body products. We can draw up a list of body items and then distinguish between those that are rubbish and those that are not. The rubbish items would include excrement, urine, finger and toe-nail clippings, pus, menstrual blood, scabs and so on. . . . The non-rubbish items would include milk, tears, babies . . . and, sometimes, sperm. If rubbishness were self-evident and derived from the intrinsic physical properties of objects, then this division of body products into rubbish and non-rubbish items would be fixed and unchangeable. Yet, in recent years, some body products have crossed from one side to the other. Phlegm is now clearly seen as rubbish but, until quite recently, it had a noble connotation. English phlegm was expectorated from splendidly stiff upper lips. The loss of empire rendered the English upper lip flaccid and English phlegm ceased to be the magical substance that kept the little brown native in his place, and became instead a repulsive green lump in the mouth during the later stages of Asian flu.

Accommodating to a world full of noise and contradiction, in which a recognizable universe is at a premium, we tend to suppress or ignore evaluations of worth different from the social evaluations to which we all stick for fear of worse. What could be worse? Rubbish.

Think of rubbish as a reservoir of discarded solutions to problems no one wants to solve. These objects and ideas are outside the pale. So are the people who prefer them. Hidden from view, judged valueless, they decay over time. While they are in the process of decomposition, they are safe from scrutiny. Dockers their half-life some small proportion, no one knows why or which, are picked up, meet some current concern, especially if they are scarce, and become collectors items.

Objects can slowly decline from transient to rubbish but they must move quickly from rubbish to durable. "Things may drift into obscurity", Thompson tells us, "but they leap into prominence." Slow movement occurs when only one boundary is crossed. Fast movement occurs when two boundaries are crossed, the valueless become valuable, hence pure rather than polluted, the unusable usable, timeless rather than time-worn, pleasing not disgusting. As Thompson conceives it, transient objects can only become durable by passing through the valley of fears called rubbish.

A reviewer cannot do justice to the extraordinary range of examples from housing to art, from "Stevengraphs-yesterday's kitsch" to applying Keynesian theory to new guinea-pig cycles, which the author marshals in support of his hypotheses. All I can do is outline his solution to explaining both radical and incremental change within the same framework.

If there is more than one culture, or "social reality" as it is sometimes called, if reality is not chiselled in concrete but both flows steadily between and leaps from one set of categories to another, how do we grab hold of the world ? Do we need a theory of cataclysms, eliminating the slow stuff of thrust and erosion? Or do we want a theory of incrementalism, society as laminectomy?

Subsuming other people's ideas under larger social categories is the social science equivalent of one-upmanship. Instead of denying contradiction, Thompson seeks to embrace it. His vehicle is mathematical "catastrophe theory", perhaps better designated as a methodological mapping that treats continuity and change as special cases of each other, allowing both smooth transformations and sudden disjunctions, containing but not necessarily using up in any empirical instance a variety of possibilities. Catastrophe or discontinuity is inclusive rather than exclusive, conserving rather than excluding the "monsters" conventional categories cannot contain, a happy conjunction for those who want to use what (or who) has been trashed another day.

Rubbish Theory is a largely successful effort "to make visible the conspiracy of blindness that is imposed by the social sciences" to prevent us looking at ourselves as we would at any other cultures. Once we start being self-consciously critical, as the author would wish, there is plenty of room for argument. In addition to the lack of an index, which is especially unfortunate because of the remarkable range of theory and theorists taken on in close combat, the relationship between transient and durable is never satisfactorily resolved. It is not enough to say that if they were challenged, categorization itself would crumble. Room has to be made for new durables, if not precipitously through rubbish, then gradually through transience. The view of the extraordinary scope of the project and the liberating power of the argument, however, *Rubbish Theory* is a major work.

It is also hard going in places. But all that effort is justified by intellectual adventure and not a little fun along the way. Thompson is well aware that those who bring about with rubbish are likely to have some of it stick. Along streets strewn with scholarly refuse, he tries to shield himself by kidding the academic establishment:

> For the social scientist who wishes to study rubbish must, at the very least, "paddle" in it. Yet if he does this what chance is there that he will "come out respectably" as his fellows? How can he remain a member of the social scientific community if, in order to study rubbish, he has to abandon the form of discourse which is the defining criterion of the community? How can he wallow in the culture in Edinburgh streets throughout the morning and contribute to post-graduate seminars at Edinburgh University in the afternoon? Yet this seemingly impossible and revolting course of action is the defining characteristic of one type of social scientist: the anthropologist, who is called Participant Observation . . . . The fundamental irreconcilability of a serious adult approach and rubbish subject-matter means that the rubbish theorist has to deal in different forms of discourse simultaneously. And since they cannot be mixed they must be juxtaposed. The joke, the paradox, the shock technique and the journalistic style, far from being unscholarly devices to be avoided at all costs, become rubbish theory's inseparable accompaniments.

If all that is rubbish is not garbage, neither is it necessarily gold. Among ideas as well as objects it remains true that many are called but few are chosen. Michael Thompson's *Rubbish Theory* belongs among the chosen few.

Females in factories

By Virginia Sapiro

SUSAN ESTABROOK KENNEDY :
If All We Did Was to Weep at Home
A History of White Working Class Women in America
351pp. Indiana University Press. £10.50.
0 253 19154 8

LESLIE WOODCOCK TENTLER :
Wage-Earning Women : Industrial Work and Family Life in the United States
266pp. Oxford University Press. £9.25.
0 19 502627 6

A joke current in American feminist circles goes like this. Question: How many feminists does it take to put in a light-bulb ? Answer: Five. One to do it and four to write about it.

The point could only be missed by those unaware of the mass of writing which the women's movement has generated over the past decade. It sometimes seems as if the chief weapon in the feminist struggle is the typewriter : hardly a topic is left untouched in the effort to criticize, interpret, and reinterpret the world from the perspective of the feminist consciousness. This makes it surprising that two new histories of American working-class women — Leslie Woodcock Tentler's *Wage-Earning Women* and Susan Estabrook Kennedy's *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home* — should appear in almost unexplored territory as the substantial philosophies of these two books demonstrate a successful search for works on American working-class women would take one back to the writing of the progressive reformers of the first decades of this century.

Susan Estabrook Kennedy has attempted to write a history of white working-class women in America. Lesla Woodcock Tentler restricts her study, primarily to factory women in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago during the first three decades of this century. In the introduction to *If All We Did Was to Weep at Home* Kennedy tells us her work is one of "definition and discovery". But these are the very qualities that the book lacks. The task of defining a working-class woman is not an easy one, but we are entitled to expect more than Kennedy's offering that working-class women may or may not be employed, that they "fall between" poverty and the middle class", although they would prefer to be middle class. The picture does not become clearer as we read on, particularly as Kennedy relies increasingly on national employment figures not categorized by occupation in the latter part of the book.

Beneath what is essentially a descriptive outline of the history of working-class women we find interesting and important questions ignored or buried in phrases which resist analysis. We find that women moved into or out of—or were moved into or out of—jobs and sectors of the market with little discussion about whether the moves were intentional on the part of employees or employers.

In the midst of a description of the Lowell factories (which might have been written by the factory owners themselves) we hear rumblings of some of the earliest labour disputes in America, but little serious attention is paid to the motivations, justifications and strategy of the participants. Even the descriptive information is often made obscure. Wage levels are presented with insufficient recognition of their significance, laws are mentioned with only a suggestion of their intent, content, and effect.

Kennedy ignores the new insights and perspectives of recent feminist history. She refers to working women as "girls", the employment of women in shipyards during the Second World War is an "invasion". There is no serious treatment of prostitution (which is described as "selling their virtue") other than to assume that now a considerable portion of the female labour force the means to survive. Even the primary thesis of the book, that working-class women did not want to be working-class, did not want to be employed, and looked forward to their retreat from the labour market into marriage, is pursued with an extraordinary lack of diligence and sensitivity.

Why, in a nation that takes such pride in its myth of mobility, is it interesting that women in particular would rather be of the middle class than of the working class? Working-class employment was never very attractive, particularly before the era of widespread labour organization, but why was marriage such an attractive alternative, and why marriage to what we can only assume are men with working-class jobs for the most part ? Kennedy maintains that the reason is the perpetration of "middle-class values" on working-class women. Attractive as this thesis might be, little evidence is provided to support it.

Leslie Woodcock Tentler, in *Wage-Earning Women*, comes to many of the same conclusions about working-class women's lack of identification as members of the working-class and about their desire to give up employment in favour of marriage. How work is beautifully organized and deftly argued. The first half of the book deals with "The World of the Job". It discusses not only industrial segregation, wages, and the well-known ills of the job environment, but also the lives of the women in those jobs.

Increasingly, historians are focusing on how women survived in appalling situations; Tentler adds to this research with fascinating observations about the world of women within the factories, their friendships and bonds, and their mutual arrangements for making life by the sewing machine more appealing than death by starvation. At times that was no mean task.

The second half of the book, "Beyond the Job: Wage Earning and Family Roles", poses the question why (despite claims of feminist theorists to the contrary) working-class women, for the most part, did not develop a working-class consciousness but rather escaped from employment to family life whenever possible. Tentler shows how differences in religion, ethics, practices, and even marital status militated against the development of working-class bonds and consciousness and concludes that for women a very bleak family life was often more satisfactory than employment.

One of the most paradoxical charges against American feminism is that it has ignored the needs and interests of working-class women. Students of women's studies are by no means innocent of the charge. Through her skilled, sensitive, and well written work Leslie Woodcock Tentler is helping to change this.

A layman professionally steeped in medical matters and long-serving editor of the *Saturday Review*, Norman Cousins describes in *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient* (175pp. Norton. £5.25. 393 01262 2) how he successfully combated a supposedly irreversible spinal disease largely by refusing the medical diagnosis and prescribed treatment, and harnessing instead his own inner resources of will power and optimism in a system of autoregeneration. He created a furore in America, where the quest for the elixir of life unfortunately inspires some highly evangelistic and dubious cures. Norman Cousins however is no charlatan, does he advance his own experience as anything more than a tentative alternative to the doctors who in his opinion have misled the human tenets of Hippocrates in the process of becoming the robots of pain-killing industry.

His answer to the professional who dismissed his recovery as a gigantic fluke of self-administered placebos is that placebos can only work when they activate the vital spark within the doctor. Every age has its instruments : contemporary medicine may be no more advanced than ever ping. He instances how recent research has compelled us to recognize Casals, Schweitzer, and the centuries of superstition and co-opt African witch-doctors into the argument that they will turn out to be more than a theoretical abstraction.

Desiring, believing, and doing

By Stephen Stich

CHRISTOPHER PEACOCKE :
Holistic Explanation
Action, Space, Interpretation
256pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £9.
0 19 824605 6

There was a time, about a dozen years ago, when it was fashionable to fret that Oxford philosophy was going to the dogs. The young lions of an earlier day were getting on, or moving to America. And it seemed that most of Oxford's promising graduate students were Americans or Canadians. During the past decade, however, it became clear that reports of the death of Oxford philosophy were greatly exaggerated. Young Oxford-trained, British philosophers have become increasingly visible on the intellectual landscape both in Britain and abroad. Christopher Peacocke is one of these young philosophers, and his reputation one of the brightest. *Holistic Explanation*, Peacocke's first book, provides abundant evidence that the reputation is well deserved.

It is Peacocke's thesis that there is a distinctive species of explanation invoked in diverse domains which are generally thought to be quite unconnected. He argues that the theory of action and the philosophy of space and time are two of six domains where this distinctive explanatory strategy looms large. Progress, he urges, can be made in both areas by noting the way in which holistic explanation is essential to each. In defence of his bold thesis, Peacocke elaborates a subtle and complex theory aimed at laying bare the anatomy and the utility of holistic explanations. His account is embedded with vigorous and often incisive argument, much of it richly compressed and highly technical. Some of his subtlest and most interesting arguments are those directed against the views of other philosophers. Peacocke wastes no time skirmishing with lightweights. He takes on Kripke, Strawson, Davidson and Pears.

His exposition is uncompromisingly professional; he makes no effort to explain technical notions or notation. It is assumed that the reader has a more than passing familiarity with the recent writings of Putnam, Kripke, Davidson and others. The book is aimed at an audience of professional philosophers *au courant* with recent developments in semantics, metaphysics and epistemology. The reader who is not well informed in these areas will find the book quite impenetrable. Yet this can hardly be counted as a defect. Contemporary philosophy, for better or worse, is a highly technical discipline, and much of it is inaccessible to the untrained outsider. But even philosophers working in the area will find much of Peacocke's book unusually tough going. Part of the blame can be laid to his prose, which is often unnecessarily obscure and on occasion utterly opaque. The problem is compounded by Peacocke's penchant for enthymematic argument. Premises needed to make arguments work are sometimes left unstated. More often, premises which are anything but obvious are plunked down as though they were quite obvious or require a defence. This ploy gives the book the ambience of an in-house position paper written for a few close philosophical friends who have been over the ground many times before and who treat many controversial theses as though they were common knowledge. With the ascendance of Michael Dummett to the Wykeham Professorship there are signs that obscurity is becoming fashionable in Oxford philosophy. Alas.

The holistic scheme of explanation is most easily illustrated by our common-sense explanations of actions. Why did Harry spread fertilizer around the tomato plants ? Well, it was because he believed that if you fertilize the tomato plants you will get large, juicy tomatoes ; and he wanted to get large juicy tomatoes. How do we know that this desire along with this belief will yield the action in question ? The answer seems to be that we are relying on a general principle. Roughly, under normal circumstances if a person desires a certain goal and believes that a given action will yield that goal, the person will perform the action in question. But now how about this principle, what warrant do we have for it ? Is it simply an empirical generalization ? Peacocke's answer is no. The general principle connecting beliefs and desires with actions is an a priori principle, in the sense that mastery of the concepts of belief and desire involves mastery of the principle. We simply would not ascribe mastery of the concepts to someone who did not accept the principle. The existence of one or more such a priori principles is one of the essential characteristics of the distinctive holistic explanatory scheme Peacocke is characterizing.

Peacocke claims that an analogous a priori principle is to be found underlying our ordinary explanations of a person's perceptual experiences. Why did Otto have experiences appropriate to being surrounded by a forest ? It was because Otto was located at a certain place, and that place was surrounded by a forest. And how do we know that Otto's location, along with the fact that the location is surrounded by forest, will lead to the experience in question ? Peacocke's answer is another a priori principle. Roughly, under normal circumstances if a perceiver is located at a place and it is or that place, then the perceiver will have an experience as of its being so." Unfortunately, Peacocke does not pause to explain why he thinks *this* principle is a priori. It is one of the many places where important premises are left without defence. Read literally, Peacocke seems to suggest that this second principle is a priori in just the same way that the first one is. But surely this is implausible. There is little temptation to say that mastering the concepts of location at a place and of being o at a place involve mastery of this second principle. We would hardly be inclined to deny that a person had mastered these concepts merely because he failed to endorse the principle.

The existence of an appropriate a priori principle does not by itself establish a holistic explanatory scheme. For there are many examples of quite ordinary physical explanation in which "two physical kinds are simultaneously postulated and linked by a specific principle." What distinguishes physical explanations using such concepts from holistic explanations is the existence of "what may be called a *governing ideal* that further constrains the intertemporal application" of the concepts used in the explanations. In the case of belief-and-desire explanations of actions the governing ideal is rationality. The beliefs and derivative desires attributed to a person at any given time must be rationally coherent, and the "pattern of beliefs and desires over time must be responsive in intelligible ways to perception, evidence, and all other sources of information reaching the agent". In these intertemporal restrictions lies "the essence of the holism". It is regrettable that on a matter essential to his theory, Peacocke is both brief and elusive. He gives us no detailed account of what this governing ideal of rationality amounts to.

Nor is he clear on just how much irrationality can be tolerated by the holistic scheme, and under what circumstances. Consider the matter of inconsistent belief. Does the governing ideal of rationality dictate that an agent's beliefs cannot be inconsistent ? Not quite. What "flows from" the governing ideal is a restriction which rules out "straightforward inconsistent beliefs where we do not have any explanation of the agent's failure to see the inconsistency, or do not have reason for believing that there is such an explanation". But what would count as an explanation of an agent's failure to see an inconsistency of this second principle. We would hardly be inclined to deny that a person had mastered these concepts merely because he failed to endorse the principle.

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ances caused by his beliefs and desires via a non-deviant causal pathway. So if we could spell out the difference between deviant and non-deviant causal chains, we would be well along toward a philosophical analysis of intentional action.

However, many philosophers, Davidson among them, are openly pessimistic about this project. They despair of spelling out the distinction between deviant and non-deviant causal chains. Peacocke is undaunted by this pessimism. In the book's finest chapter he elaborates a subtle and intriguing account of the deviant/non-deviant distinction. The basic idea of his account is that in non-deviant causal chains, the action which is produced is *sensitive* to relevant variations in the beliefs and desires that cause it. In developing a detailed theory about the appropriate sort of sensitivity, Peacocke weaves a brilliant tapestry that will be an enduring contribution to the philosophical literature.

Matter over mind

By Colin McGinn

MICHAEL E. LEVIN:
Metaphysics and the Mind-Body Problem
292pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.
0 19 824415 0

What is wanted, as a solution to the mind-body problem, is some theory of the mind which intelligibly locates it in the physical world while at the same time respecting its distinctive characteristics. The difficulty has been to find a theory that does justice to both desiderata. The version of materialism Michael E. Levin offers as a solution to the problem in *Metaphysics and the Mind-Body Problem* claims that there are none but physical entities and that all of their properties are ultimately physical. This position fulfills the first desideratum, but incurs a large obligation in respect of the second. By way of discharging the obligation Levin sets out to make physical sense of conscious sensations, emotional attitudes, "privileged access" to one's own mental states, and freedom of the will. His discussion of these issues is mostly clear and workmanlike, but often unconvincing; throughout one has the impression (inevitable perhaps) of someone bending the facts to fit a prior thesis.

After some fairly routine (but solid) preparatory discussion of ontology and reduction, and a perfunctory dismissal of a dualism of mental and physical substances, Levin starts on his own positive claims by denying that there are mental entities. His "main argument" for this view is that there is no distinction to be drawn between a pain or other sensation and one's awareness of it— the *esse* of sensations is *percipi*.

But it is never made clear why it is wrong to say that sensations are entities distinguished precisely by possession of that property; so the alleged argument is patently question-begging. (As for the thesis that the ascription of mental properties does not entail that there are mental entities, Levin simply fails to broach the kinds of (if any) logical consideration relevant to its proper assessment: discernment of semantic structure (adverbial modification comes to mind); how mental causation is to be construed; what to make of the individuative apparatus associated with mental terms.)

Having thus (as he thinks) disposed of mental entities, Levin moves on to mental properties, favouring a "topic neutral" account which characterizes mental properties by adverting to the typical causes and effects of mental states. Although he does not, in the end, accept traditional versions of this sort of proposal, he is too indulgent towards them: he fails to notice lurking circularities, and never questions the physical credentials of secondary qualities such as colour. On the other hand, the more recent versions of topic neutralism, in which mental states are individuated by their causal role in the organism's total psychology, are too hastily dismissed (the analytic version is impatiently treated, and the empirical reduction version scarcely gets a look-in); and he also asserts, as if it were self-evident, that pains and tickles could have the same causal role.

Such unsympathetic treatment is odd, because Levin's own brand of topic neutralism, in which the mental descriptions serve to fix the reference of mental terms rather than give their meaning— described as his "main innovation"— seems hopeless, on its own, as a physical reduction of mental properties, and departs from Lewis, Nagel, Putnam, et al. in this respect. Levin shields himself by sloppiness about tokens and types. In effect, he has by this stage opted for non-reductive monism, contrary to the position we were promised. Here we find Levin weakening his materialism under pressure from the physical intractability of the mental—but loth to admit it.

Levin's discussion of "privileged access" is more successful; he argues quite persuasively that the asymmetry between first-person and third-person knowledge of mental states creates no difficulty for materialism, it being basically a matter of the causal proximity of the knower to the mental state known about. Here the "aboutness" of thoughts is less adequately dealt with. Levin begins by identifying the problem as that of explaining in physical terms the peculiarly intimate character of the relation between a thought and its object, but soon redirects his discussion towards some (dubiously relevant) logically anomalous properties of psychological sentences. What he misses of the problems raised for materialism by the intentional relation itself, even where the sentences expressing it are free of logical anomaly: for how can a brain state be "internally related" to an object in the world?

The final two chapters of the book—on computers and freedom—are somewhat peripheral to the main theme, and Levin's chosen targets give him a pretty easy time. In a way the question whether a machine could suffer a mental life is already settled in the affirmative by acceptance of materialism, since the brain is (in the relevant sense) a machine. Levin defends the view that freedom and determinism are compatible, taking it that free action is doing what you want. He conspicuously omits to inquire whether free choice implies an ability to do otherwise; and it is just here that the incompatibilist suspects a clash between the possibilities implied by choice and the inexorabilities implied by determinism.

Metaphysics and the Mind-Body Problem is a technically sophisticated and generally competent discussion of some aspects of its subject, but it is short on arresting insights, is uneven and bitty, and tends to go fuzzy at critical points. It is also disappointing, especially in a book which takes up so many tangential and minor issues, to find so little attention paid to some of the more interesting and influential recent writers in the mind-body area—Davidson, Dennett, Kripke, Nagel, Putnam, et al.

The nature of natural necessity

By L. Jonathan Cohen

D. H. MELLOR (Editor):
Science, Belief and Behaviour.
Essays in honour of R. B. Braithwaite
227pp Cambridge University Press. £10.50.
0 521 22960 X

It is always a pleasure to see those who deserve honour being worthily honoured. Richard Braithwaite's distinctive and important contribution to British philosophy during the past fifty-six years is now fitly rewarded with a collection of original essays by twelve friends and ex-pupils.

Braithwaite's work stands at the intersection, as it were, of two powerful movements. On the one side, it belongs to the Cambridge tradition of exact philosophy, which bred the work of men like W. E. Johnson, Harold Jeffreys, Bertrand Russell, and Frank Ramsey. On the other side it may be viewed as a contribution to that international programme for the logical analysis of the language of science which was proclaimed *urbi et orbi* by the Vienna Circle. Not surprisingly, therefore, the present essayists concentrate their attention on problems about the nature and methodology of scientific theory, the foundations of probability and induction, and the study of rational decision-making — the problems that have also been in the forefront of Braithwaite's own concern. Moreover they all write in the spirit of clarity and openness that has always characterized his work, as it also characterized Russell's, say, or Carnap's.

There are no dark hints, no pregnant ellipses, no subtle intimations of hidden depth, no teasing sinuosities of style. Such difficulties as there are spring wholly from the nature of the subject and are not compounded by any of the avoidable obfuscation or wilful indirectness that sometimes masquerades, even in contemporary philosophy, for profundity.

Each of the essayists—Gerd Buchdahl, Ian Hacking, John Harsanyi, Mary Hesse, Nick Jardine, Richard Jeffrey, Stephan Körner, Henry Kyburg, Isaac Levi, Margaret Masterman, Hugh Mellor, and Frederick Schick—has something very worth while to say. But their arguments cannot all be usefully summarized here. It is more fruitful to abstract a single central issue on which Braithwaite's own attitude is not only shared by two of the contributors who currently teach at Cambridge, but is also strongly representative of the whole tradition within which they philosophize. This attitude—which is one of thoroughgoing metaphysical austerity—turns out to be not as easy to defend as some of its supporters have supposed.

The issue concerns the logical content of the laws that natural science has, at least in part, been concerned to discover, since the beginnings of modern investigation in the seventeenth century. In view of the systematic progress that had already been made in some branches of mathematics, and especially in geometry, it is understandable that at first many modern philosophers were inclined to take mathematical laws as paradigms for the new knowledge. The study of motion would not seem so very different from the study of space, and Descartes had shown how the laws of geometry could be mapped on to those of numbers. But Hume advanced two influential arguments against the claim that causal laws should be attributed the necessary truth that mathematical laws enjoy. First, he said, their truth may always be denied without inconsistency, whereas it is self-contradictory to deny any genuine mathematical law. Secondly, we are never aware of anything in nature which the idea of "necessity" can represent: our use of the idea springs instead from our own habits of mental association.

But the first of Hume's two arguments established at best only that causal laws could not enjoy the kind of necessity that rests on the self-contradictoriness of a denial. If natural necessity falls short of this, it is not hit by Hume's first argument. And Hume's second argument rests on an assumption that all human concepts have a representative function—an assumption that seems to be belied at the very least by the existence of purely logical terms like "and" or "if". Moreover, Hume's thesis that causal laws are just patterns of actual co-occurrence seems unable to account for all that we can infer from them. In particular it seems unable to account for our apparent ability to infer, say, that if there is a fire in the room (which there isn't) it would have been warm: such a counterfactual conditional seems to describe a possible, but non-actual co-occurrence. Whether or not we use the terminology of "laws", we have somehow to account for the rationality of such counterfactual beliefs. Hume's thesis also fails to acknowledge that some laws, though considered highly important by scientists, are never instantiated at all. Newton's first law of motion—that every particle not acted upon by an external force continues at rest, or in uniform motion in a straight line—is the classic example.

Braithwaite, like Ramsey and Russell, shared Hume's starkly simple metaphysical vision: there is no necessity in nature. So how can the obvious difficulties in Hume's account be met? Braithwaite's view was that what makes a scientific hypothesis the statement of a law is one or other of two things. Either the hypothesis occurs in an established scientific deductive system as a higher-level hypothesis containing theoretical concepts, (i.e. concepts like those of an electron, a wave-function, a field of force, etc); or it occurs in such a system as a deduction from higher-level hypotheses which are supported by empirical evidence that is not direct evidence for the hypothesis itself. Either way, it is the role of the hypothesis in that kind of system, not something in the internal content of the hypothesis, which makes it a law. This is always provisional, Braithwaite sought to give an epistemological, rather than logical interpretation, to the characterization of a hypothesis as a "law". This characterization, on his view, does not ascribe a necessary truth of any kind, but reports on the nature of the hypothesis's title to acceptance.

Braithwaite's characterization of causal laws does not entirely coincide with the category of statements from which counterfactual conditionals have at one time or another been supposed to be derivable. One need not attribute any belief in the existence of scientific deductive systems to the uneducated person who believes that if there had been a fire in the room it would have been warm. So it looks as though one may be able to conceive a description, like Braithwaite's, which purks an roughly what counts a law in modern science without also being a description which will resolve the core of the problem. Indeed, there seems no reason why *every* statement that is a law of nature in Braithwaite's sense should not be capable of licensing conclusions not only about the actual course of events in the physical universe but also about alternative possible courses.

Loose ends are rare in the tightly woven development of Braithwaite's ideas. But this seems to be a particularly fruitful one, which has been one source of stimulation for the two contributors to the present volume who put forward their own views on the subject.

Mary Hesse seeks to resolve the problem within the context of her own view that the strength of theoretically based prediction in natural science should be seen as depending on the probability of a similarity between past instances and the future one, rather than on the degree to which some open-ended generalization has been confirmed by the evidence. Correspondingly, a counterfactual inference may be seen as an assignment of probability in the event in circumstances that—as a matter of fact—never materialized.

What has happened here is that the problem about laws has been transformed into a problem about the analysis of the appropriate concept of probability. For example, we are quite familiar with such assignments of probability in games of chance, where every outcome has a specifiable probability even if the game is never played. But obviously the determination of the probabilities in such a case (once we assume that it is a genuine game of chance) is a matter for calculation, not observation. So this case gives us only a rather slight analogy with natural science, or with the knowledge on which we base our everyday counterfactuals.

Could the relevant probabilities be seen instead as expressing the intensity of a belief, which might be measured by the odds at which a rational person would be prepared to bet on the outcome? Hesse invokes such a measure elsewhere (under the name of *The Strength of Scientific Inference*). But a rational person can hardly be supposed to engage in unsettlable wagers, and wagers on the truth of counterfactual conditionals do not seem easy to settle. Of course, it may be that the relevant probabilities could be satisfactorily conceived of as inherent tendencies, or propensities, as Popper calls them. But then the fine metaphysical austerity that was the underlying objective of the analysis has been rather diluted. If there are genuine propensities in the world, and not just relative frequencies, then there is a genuine form of causal necessity, and not just regularities of co-occurrence.

Hugh Mellor's contribution to the present discussion is perhaps the most strate fatal weaknesses in some recent kinds of proposal for an alternative to the regularity theory. The problem is not to be solved, he shows, either by laws to be statements of what is true in all possible worlds, or by taking them to be contingent statements of relationships between universal properties. Neither construal can cover the crucial case of natural laws which Braithwaite rightly stresses.

Perhaps in the end the best answer is just to acknowledge that no logical analysis of the kind of statement can be correct if it fails to attribute the kind of causality that everyone who uses that sort of statement assumes it to have. Laws of nature *must* be more than just regularities of co-occurrence. But it doesn't follow that any natural necessity is a mystery, or that additional force is natural. It is told about it need not be told more about what actually exist in nature, but only what could exist in it under different conditions. Moreover, when contemporary logicians a picturesque thing from the long down Hume's blind alley, one can take a valuable cue from Braithwaite's epistemological stance in the problem. The more worldly task for philosophers is to elucidate here is to try to elucidate the statements of natural necessity be supported by reports of observable fact. The denial that any statements at all are to be supported by reports of observable fact will never convince the unconvincible.

Coming after Aristotle

By A. A. Long

MALCOLM SCHOFIELD, MYLES BURNYEAT and JONATHAN BARNES (Editors):
Doubt and Dogmatism
Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology
349pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0 19 824601 3

Who said "only now has the time arrived when the systems of the Epicureans, Stoics and Sceptics will be understood. They are the philosophies of *Selbstbewusstsein*"? For Hegel, as one might have guessed, but Marx, in a fragmentary first preface to his doctoral thesis of 1841, "The difference between the Democritean and Epicurean philosophies of nature." In his earliest published work Marx recognized that Hegel's history of philosophy had failed to bring out the importance of the new philosophical movements which developed in Greece after Alexander the Great and Aristotle. He intended to set the record straight, to show that these systems are the key to the true history of Greek philosophy." But, as he later wrote, "political and philosophical activities of a quite different kind" prevented him from writing the comprehensive history of post-Aristotelian philosophy which his doctoral thesis promised.

That study of Epicurus and Democritus is still of scholarly interest, but one wishes Marx had devoted a year or two of his time at the British Museum to the larger project. His assessment of post-Aristotelian or Hellenistic philosophy, if exaggerated and ever confidently expressed, points a road which needs constant reassertion, as it happily receives in this collection of papers presented originally at a conference in Oxford which was organized by the editors. The venue is significant. Oxford nurtures pure philosophers and classical scholars than any other university, but its great tradition in the study of Plato and Aristotle has hardly accommodated their Greek successors. For reasons that would be fascinating to investigate, the negative judgment, of which Marx complains, has been extremely powerful in Anglo-American work on Greek philosophy.

It is a judgment which would have puzzled Descartes, Hume and Kant. Through Cicero and Augustine, through Plutarch, Sextus Empiricus, and Diogenes Laertius (in the original or in Latin versions), seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophers were educated in the epistemological and ethical controversies which these second-hand sources disseminated. Epicurean, stoic and sceptic entered our everyday language, as Platonist and Aristotelian did not.

That fact of course betokens nothing about philosophical merit, but it does indicate a popular awareness of Greek philosophers whose original significance was too easily overlooked once they had become supposedly old friends like Tully's Offices. Popularity breeds contempt, and the scholarly result of popularity in this case has been neglect. The brilliant work devoted to Presocratic philosophy over the past hundred years has rendered Zeller's chapters on that subject quite obsolete. For Hellenistic philosophy, a much larger field, his *Geschichte der griechischen Philosophie* is still required reading.

But there are many signs, from recent books and conferences, that the tide has finally turned again for Hellenistic philosophy. The careful study of arguments, and technical terminology reveals no Hegelian decline from an Aristotelian eminence but a continuing debate in which epistemology above all gets a sharpness of focus that is historically novel and recognizably modern. In a field which still needs many pioneers the contributors to this most welcome book have broken new ground and indicated further areas for investigation.

Their concentration on epistemology points to the division of the principal Hellenistic philosophers into dogmatists (Stoics and Epicureans) and sceptics (Academics and Pyrrhonists). Pyrrhonian scepticism provides the chronological limits. Pyrrho himself accompanied Alexander to India. Five centuries later, when Pyrrhonism had been equipped with the formidable dialectic of the sceptical Academy, Sextus Empiricus charted the great controversies of the period in his encyclopedia of pro and contra arguments. The dogmatists, whom he opposed, were, in his own words, "men who believed they had discovered the truth". Their "dogmatism" was not, as the word might suggest, an unreasoned insistence on knowing certain truths, but a commitment to doctrines which, as Stoics or Epicureans, they believed they could prove on the basis of indubitable evidence and rules of inference. The primacy of epistemology in both these systems stimulated, and probably helped as a response to, the sceptical challenge that neither perception nor reason can provide any foundation for reasonable belief. Stoics and Epicureans demanded criteria of truth, and used them, most importantly, to sustain very different conceptions of the *summum bonum*. The sceptical response to conflicting opinions and the absence of an agreed criterion was suspension of judgment about everything, a philosophical attitude productive for the Pyrrhonists, so they said, of equanimity.

Well-equipped with bibliography and indexes, *Doubt and Dogmatism* is not a book for the casual reader. The sources of Hellenistic philosophy are an exegetical minefield, but the bonus, for painstaking textual work, is the discovery or reinterpretation of an interesting philosophical thesis. That order of priorities is characteristic of this book, whose authors are equally versatile as philosophers and philologists. Four of the best contributions make significant advances in areas where, it might have been supposed, there was little new to say because the topics in question were all too familiar in the history of philosophy. In "Can the Sceptic Live his Scepticism?" Myles Burnyeat makes the classic pages of Sextus Empiricus exciting by taking Pyrrhonism seriously as "a life without belief". Ultimately, he argues, one must agree with Hume and ancient critics on the impossibility of such a life. But Burnyeat's subtle and elegant discussion gives Pyrrhonian "appearances" as the mental resources which replace beliefs) a philosophical interest never previously appreciated.

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But is the theory of reality so based empty of all content, as Taylor concludes? Taken on its own one might agree that it plays into the sceptic's hands. But Epicurus thought he could supply the content by means of epistemological principles not discussed by Taylor: "confirmation", "non-contradiction", and "preconception". The truth of all perceptions does not leave us, or is not meant to leave us, in a quasi-subjectivist position. Starting from that as our datum we are expected to extend to the reassuring evidence for stable beings and regularities, as perceived under optimally clear conditions.

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Frede makes the original suggestion that every antecedent cause of what something does is antecedent by being the "perfect" cause of an effect which is itself the "perfect" cause of what something does. I take him to mean that the push fully activates the drum's capacity to roll; this effect now becomes the "perfect" cause of the drum's rolling. If this interpretation will square with the evidence it would imply that the Stoics could provide a complete explanation for any particular fact by restricting causes to active cause.

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Speaking up for syllogisms

By Julia Annas

JONATHAN LEAR:
Aristotle and Logical Theory
190pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
0 521 23031 4

It is an orthodoxy of modern logic that there are no reasons other than historical ones for studying Aristotle's syllogism". This orthodoxy is examined not by reading books which criticize Aristotle's logic, such as the influential introductory book by E. J. Lemmon from which the above quotation comes, Jonathan Lear challenges that orthodoxy. What makes his book so important is not, as he writes not as a historian concerned to restore Aristotle's logic but as a logician out to show that logicians have been simply wrong to think that developments since Frege have removed the theoretical interest of Aristotle's work.

The limitations of Aristotle's logical system are obvious enough: propositional proofs recognized by Aristotle as sound cannot be formalized in it, it cannot capture inferences whose validity depends on propositional connectives, and its way of handling "all" and "some" cannot cope with sentences of multiple generality. There have been many defences of Aristotle on the ground that within these limitations his inferences can be formalized relatively clearly than in modern systems; but Lear is rightly interested in this, since he sees the shortcomings of Aristotle's formalisations as due to the fact that he is not very interested in formalisation; "Aristotle shares with contemporary logicians a primary interest in metalogic". In the chapters of this short, clear and closely written book Lear develops aspects of Aristotle's conception of syllogistic as an object of theoretical study rather than as a tool for working out valid patterns of everyday reasoning.

Modern logic works from the assumption that there are two fundamental notions of logical concepts: syntactic and semantic. The syntax of a logical language is given by rules for manipulating uninterpreted symbols: a syntactic consequence is what you get if you make the right moves following the rules. Semantics brings in interpretation: a sentence P is a semantic consequence of a set of sentences X if P is true in every model in which all the members of X are true. For Aristotle, however, there has been no divorce between syntactic and semantic consequence. A syllogism is "an entity which possesses a necessity which is not a semantic relation between premises and conclusions". Hence for Aristotle the relation of syllogistic consequence is a primitive; he does not first distinguish two questions separate anyway in Latin versions), seventeenth and eighteenth-century philosophers were educated in the epistemological and ethical controversies which these second-hand sources disseminated. Epicurean, stoic and sceptic entered our everyday language, as Platonist and Aristotelian did not.

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In Connemara

This country has shaken off its
Inhabitants and filled their fields
With water and stones. Between
Outraged wavings of the grass,
Sullen pools like thick dark eyes
Ignore us. The ground breathes
Proudly through its clotted pelts.
The granular light hurls brittle stars
Against our faces. We stand at last
On the panting hills, where the wind
Tightens its cries and blows them away.

Michael Hofmann

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Richard Sorabji
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43 Gloucester Crescent, London, NW1

The felicity of the Provost

By Robert Birley

RICHARD WILLIAM PFAFF :
Montague Rhodes James
464pp Scolar Press. £18.50.
0 85967 554 8

It may seem strange to some that Montague Rhodes James—Monty to those who knew him well, and MRJ to those like myself who were young masters at Eton when he was Provost there, though Mr Provost when one met him—was thought deserving of a biography at all. The posts he held, while distinguished, were rather remote ones. He went to Eton as a schoolboy in 1876, when he was fourteen, moved on to King's College, Cambridge, six years later, gained a degree there and in due course a fellowship, held various posts in the administration of the college and in 1905, when he was forty-three, became its Provost. Thirteen years later he became Provost of Eton, where he remained until he died in 1936. MRJ had in addition an unrivalled position as a scholar, in the field of medieval manuscripts and literature. Eton and King's are certainly highly respected places of education but the number of people likely to be greatly interested in their internal history of fifty to a hundred years ago must be limited, and most people will regard the field of his scholarship as obscure. Yet for those who knew MRJ, and for hundreds of others for whom he has become something of a legend, it will be a matter of real delight that his life has now been written.

It must have been an uncommonly difficult biography to write. To many of us, even if we knew him well, MRJ has seemed a most mysterious figure. He was a superbly competent scholar, but on paper he often seemed to have a very limited point of view. Take, for example, his Schweich Lectures of 1927 on *The Apocalypse in Art*. Anyone working on this subject and having to consider, for instance, some newly discovered medieval manuscript with illustrations of the Apocalypse, would find these lectures indispensable. The illustrations of every known work in any way comparable are fully described. One is told of all the various ways, for instance, of depicting the Rider on the Pale Horse. Yet suppose one wants to go further and discover why there were such variations, whether they mirrored some change in the popular attitude towards the Book or at least in the emphasis placed on difficult incidents; then *The Apocalypse in Art* will not prove very useful. A quotation from one of the lectures will show what James might have done, or done more often.

> Whereas the artists and expositors of the thirteenth century (with the exception of Brother Alexander) did not see in every detail of the Book a heralding of definite events in history, there was a growing tendency to do so as the period of the Reformation drew nigh. To us nothing is more familiar than the view that Rome, the Papacy, is the Scarlet Woman, or Babylon. Need I say that this was not the idea of the thirteenth-century illustrator? But already in the Wittenberg Bible of 1522 the Scarlet Woman wears a triple crown. In this kind of way the controversies of the time are reflected in the illustrations of the Book.

Any biography of MRJ needs not merely to pay a tribute to his extraordinary scholarship but to show what it amounted to. There are times in this book perhaps when it becomes too detached from his life as a whole. As an example where the juxtaposition may have been misplaced one might take his use of the Eton College Library when he was still a boy at the school. The importance of this in his development is very well dealt with in a chapter entitled "Eton Schollmy". But one has to wait for over a hundred pages, in a chapter on "The Early Catalogues and Related Manuscript Investigations", to find any analysis of MRJ's discoveries in the Library and of some of the mistakes he made in his first catalogue. The present reviewer, however, must admit to a very strong prejudice here: for obtaining permission, as a very junior master, to go into the College Library and study the manuscripts with the aid of MRJ's Catalogue was a watershed in his life.

It is absolutely right, however, that his work in the field of medieval manuscripts should be fully recorded and it is good to find here the praise accorded by the late T. S. R. Boase to "the minute, penetrating and far-seeing labours of Dr M. R. James, whose catalogues are the basis of all later research and whose achievement belongs in its extent to the age of giants"—a judgment echoed by two other recent scholars, Dom David Knowles and Nicolas Barker.

But besides being one of the greatest of all English scholars, MRJ was for thirty-one years of his life the head of two great educational establishments. His work as a Provost certainly took up much of his time. This is dealt with admirably in Richard William Pfaff's life, even though he has not found much to write about MRJ as an administrator. He was a competent and sensible administrator, but it cannot be claimed that in this field he was at all brilliant.

His wonderful scholarship and his unspectacular success as an administrator do not explain why he was such a remarkable person. This could only be done by depicting MRJ's personality, and it is hard to imagine a more demanding task. He was most certainly not a forceful personality, who impressed himself on other people. So what was it that made him so impressive? Perhaps one of his chief qualities was his unexpectedness. Who could have expected that this great scholar would have been the finest writer of ghost stories of his time? But a key to MRJ's personality may be found in the fact that these ghost stories were first written for and read to the members of the Choir School at King's at Christmas parties. For the two most remarkable features of MRJ were his friendliness, both to students at King's and to schoolboys in his house at Eton, and the way in which he could foster interesting conversations without having much to say himself. An anecdote quoted by Mr Pfaff is revealing:

> When Monty James was in his early thirties, Lord Acton came here with his older and wider fame and his insatiable curiosity about people. "You know Montague James", he asked a King's man, "Yes, I know him." "Is it true that he is ready to spend every evening playing games or talking with undergraduates?" "Yes, the evening and more." "And do you know that in knowledge of MSS he is already third or fourth in Europe?" "I am interested to hear you say so, Sir." "Then how does he manage it?" "We have not yet found out."

It was the same when he returned to Eton. S. G. Lubbock in his *Memoir of Montague Rhodes James* wrote that

> there was a constant stream of boys going to breakfast or dinner at the Lodge, and no special ability or distinction was needed to earn that deeply prized invitation . . . the boy would go with some awe and trepidation and return, bewildered and delighted and, above all, encouraged; for his own small concerns and interests were shared, it seemed, by this vastly learned man who had discussed them with complete knowledge and understanding.

Lubbock also has a story about him being "found sitting alone on a bench in Agar's Plough, where a housematch was being played. He was obviously pleased and amused about something; it appeared that he had been sitting with a small new boy, and they had conversed parties. For the two most remarkable features of MRJ were his friendliness, both to students at King's and to schoolboys in his house at Eton, and the way in which he could foster interesting conversations without having much to say himself. An anecdote quoted by Mr Pfaff is revealing:

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The eccentrics of Erdigg

By E. S. Turner

MERLIN WATERSON :
The Servants' Hall
A Domestic History of Erddig
240pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £8.95.
0 7100 0476 1

When the National Trust, in 1973, was offered a large Denbighshire house which had sunk five feet at one end and three-and-a-half feet at the other, with its State Bedroom supported by pit props, the property must have seemed as desirable as a giant tanker stranded amidships on a reef. Why not let Erddig go the way of Hamilton Palace, so efficiently undermined by the underpaid colliers of the Dukes of Hamilton?

It was a hard decision, not helped by the verdict of "the director of a leading national museum" that Erddig was "an evil house". But the Trust took the gamble. The story of the reclamation is one of courage, dedication, resource and—let us not forget—sheer luck; for Erddig could never have been fittingly endowed without an adventitious and short-lived boom in land values which allowed a parcel of fields to be sold off for £1 million.

One factor which swayed the Trust's decision was the unusually close relationship which the squires of Erddig had enjoyed, for more than two centuries, with their servants, whom they commemorated not only in portraits but in verse. Thus, in a special sense, Erddig was a "servants' hall".

As a National Trust official, Merlin Waterson suffered Erddig's gross discomforts while sharing the reminiscences of the last squire, Philip Yorke, and examining his copious papers. Although the house has enjoyed much recent publicity, the author is able to offer captivating new material.

The late Philip Yorke was a considerable eccentric, though less wary and reclusive than his brother Simon, from whom he inherited in 1966. Determined to rescue the sinking house from its slumdom, preferably without Government help, he lived there alone, amid the sounds of disintegration, "armed" with a .22 rifle which, it now appears, had no firing pin.

Far from being an evil house, Erddig was a model of good community living; it even lacked that formal barrier between upstairs and downstairs, the green baize door. The Yorkes were neither tyrants nor fops, but unambitious, even mediocre, country gentlemen. The house was built in 1683 by a High Sheriff of Denbighshire, Joshua Edisbury, who finished up in the Fleet Prison, leaving the next owner, John Meller, a Master in Chancery, to furnish the house with uncommon opulence. In 1733 Erddig passed to a nephew, the first Simon Yorke, who inaugurated a tradition of leaving things well alone and ignoring new fashions in gardens. It was his son, the First Philip, who began composing rhymes about servants. Perhaps, says Mr Waterson, this sprang from his passion for theatricals; in 1786 he staged *Henry II*. Erddig, with a perplexing, spoken by his Exmoian son, which contained allusions to cook, gardener and housemaid.

The Yorkes' verses have little merit as such; the surprising thing is that they were written at all. Mr Waterson quotes them extensively for the light they shed on daily life, the tasks of "spider brushing", gate-repairing, pot-carrying and so forth. Of John Nicholas, a deaf kitchen man kept on out of charity, we are told:

> Then in the Kitchen corner stuck,
> He pluck'd the fowl, and drew the duck,
> Or with the basket on his knees,
> Was sheller-general to the peas. . . .

An attentive tradesman, Thomas Jones, was "not amaciate" but "somewhat celefaciate". William Williams, the blacksmith, "with fargrugineous arts, Play'd first Physician to the carts". Criticism is rare. John Davies, an under-gardener, showed great industry

> Though now and then inclin'd to ask
> The "whys" and "wherefores" of each task.

The verses may have been in part a public relations exercise designed to make servants grateful for their wages, which under this roof were consistently low. Oddly, no couplets seem to have been inspired by Elizabeth Ratcliffe, a lady's maid who was a skilful artist and model maker (her Chinese pagoda and "Ruins of Palmyra" are shown to visitors). The Yorkes were proud of her, though her mistress feared she might become puffed up. There would have been some cause for concern if she had tried to write novels.

The second Philip, a complete versifier, was surely created by a gallery of Victorian oddities. His first wife left him, hitching an early morning lift on a milk float; her second, Many years later they died by accident outside the Anglo-American Navy Stores. "Is it peace, Philip?" she asked, "Madam", he replied, "let me show you to your carriage." He did and they never spoke more. He married his second wife during a walking tour in Switzerland, telling her she was like a snowdrop. Their honeymoon, in a high wind, he towed her on a bicycle behind his tricycle.

A chapter on "Pathers" and occasions when the servants in the house danced. In 1907 an Erddig ball was solemnized at Wrexham after the lawful conversion of money and lawyer called the Yorkes "John" on the pathway of life". We as Yorkes she remained.

As fond a thief as e'er we saw,
Though whitewashed by the law

Even for unambitious squires of World War Two service of the last two Yorkes was notably poor. Simon, after "a series of frustrations", one of which involved being a steam roller, was invalided out. Philip, a one-time professional soldier, became a Royal Army Educational Corps sergeant and tried in vain across "a non-left point of view" in talks and "discussions" after the feat in 1945.

The incidental glimpses of life at Erddig are fascinating: a new servant ransomed from the gypsy gang (but was that a particularly good thing?); a butler (chloroforming himself for the children of the house); careful filing of an important letter from "one who has the interests eyes open". Even the inventory of possessions repays study.

Not until page 200 does Mr Waterson tell us about the Yorkes' substantial coal royalties mined by private enterprise under the Coal Board, whose officials they would excavate, whose they pleased. They are let down rather too lightly in the book, for they must be the only civilians in Britain to be congratulated and sympathized with on having "had" Mr Waterson as their historian. Equally interesting is the life story of the admirable companion to the house books of Mark Girouard.

Perpetual anxieties

By Andrew Sinclair

JOHN CARL MILLER (Editor) :
Poe's Helen Remembers
512pp. Charlottesville : University Press of Virginia. $24.95.
0 8139 0771 3

Samuel Richardson, Henry James and Vladimir Nabokov would have enjoyed this book within a book. It does with facts what they wrought so artfully in fiction; being the correspondence of one of Edgar Allan Poe's late loves, Mrs Sarah Helen Whitman, with John Henry Ingram, who became Poe's first major biographer in England. It has been scrupulously edited by John Carl Miller, who was Eminent Professor of English at Old Dominion University. He has already published a comparative book on *Building Poe Biography*, and now treats us to a rare correspondence, which both informs and delights. Connoisseurs of Poe studies will learn something more, and admirers of the comedy of writing literary biography will revel in the twists and turns taken by the dead subject, the surviving witness and the gentlemanly ferret from the other side of the Atlantic.

As Mrs Whitman told Ingram, Poe, like Byron, had a morbid love of mystification. He deliberately distorted the facts of his life. His reputation was further damned by his literary executor, the jealous and venomous Griswold, who seems to have taken the job in order to vent his envy of genius. Mrs Whitman was one of the few to object to Griswold's calumnies. Six people applied to her over the years for help in clearing Poe's name; all failed, and one went insane. The seventh was Ingram, the lucky man. She began her correspondence with him six days before her seventy-first birthday.

> The young man's task was almost as delicate as that in *The Aspern Papers*. Mrs Whitman's relationship with Poe a quarter of a century before had been notorious. Erratic after the death of his childish wife, he was courting several ladies at the same time, some of whom were courting him. Mrs Whitman had first sent him a public Valentine, which asked the grim and ghastly Raven to take her to some lofty eyrie. When he did visit her in Providence, Rhode Island, he found the priestess of a new cult of spiritualism, who wore a miniature coffin round her neck, and who quietened her nerves by a handkerchief soaked in ether. He proposed immediately in a cemetery. She hesitated, but did not refuse him.
>
> At this point, he became confused. He swore to give up drink, wrote simultaneous love letters, to his Helen and to his beloved Mrs "Annie" Richmond, took an overdose of laudanum, recovered, and went on a drinking spree in Providence, making Mrs Whitman refuse him under pressure from her dominant mother. He clung to her so hard that he tore away part of her floating muslin dress. As she finally revealed to the inquisitive Ingram:
>
> Utterly worn out & exhausted by the mental conflicts & anxieties & responsibilities of the last few days, I drenched my handkerchief with ether & threw myself on a sofa, hoping to lose myself in utter unconsciousness. Sinking on his knees beside me, he entreated me to speak to him—to speak—one word, but one word. At last, I responded, almost inaudibly, "What can I say?" "Say that you love me, Helen." "I love you."
>
> Those three words were the last I ever spoke to him. He remonstrated & explained & expostulated. But I had sunk from a violent ague fit into a cold and death-like torpor . . . .

In spite of such a parting, which humiliated Poe on the verge of his betrothal to her, she believed that she was his last love, the subject of his famous poem, "To Helen". She wished to vindicate his reputation and affirm her place in his life. Ingram set about winning her trust with acumen and persistence. Firstly, he declared his hatred of Griswold's beastly story, everywhere accepted as gospel, except by Baudelaire in France. Soon he was telling Mrs Whitman of his virtue in keeping a dependent mother and sisters on his salary as a government clerk and as a literary reviewer. Then he became more intimate, writing of the hereditary insanity in his family and of his own nervous collapses. He sent her his poems, scribbled by night, and lavishly praised hers. He called her his "Providence" because she was the key that unlocked original Poe papers and memoirs; she called him "MacRaven" after he claimed that was the Teutonic origin of his surname.

Both became addicts of the correspondence. Mrs Whitman worried that Ingram's instability would prevent him from finishing the biography. He worried that Mrs Whitman's bad health and love of the occult would end her use as his chief source. Once she wrote to him that, dressed in an Albanian costume with a burnt cork moustache, she looked exactly like Poe, her affinity. He had Mallarmé send her his translation of *The Raven* illustrated by Manet, and after their first misunderstanding, he complained like a jilted lover of his "red hot agony" at the thought that she was playing with him. "All my nerves are living ones", he asserted. "I am in a perpetual anxiety."

Yet the nature of his perpetual anxiety about finishing his definitive biography of Poe was changing. Initially, the letters show him totally dependent on Mrs Whitman for his new material. After he published a preliminary *Memoir*, however, other Poe sources communicated with him in letters or in London. Soon he was boasting of his many friends in America, although he claimed that Mrs Whitman was his only confidante one. And finally, he took the ultimate steps in the service of truth or his own reputation.

After a coup of discovering in the British Museum the first edition of *Tamerlane* by Poe, published in 1827 "By a Bostonian", Ingram felt himself to be the leading authority on the poet. He began to doubt Mrs Whitman's testimony by comparing it to other sources. He quarrelled with her about the dating of "To Helen". She wrote back to say that, if his dating were correct, then all she had told him about the poem was a fiction, not to say a falsehood. He was not yet confident enough to make a break with her, so he made a nonchalant apology, replying, "Don't go making hobgoblins out of slips of the pen". Faced with the loss of her true knight, she forgave him, promising, "I will not make 'a fuss', nevermore".

He had still to prove the dominance that he had won for himself. After meeting in London two sources who denied one of Mrs Whitman's anecdotes about Poe, he wrote to her, "Nothing one gets about Poe seems to be reliable. Sometimes I fancy that he never lived and sometimes, I think *there must* have been two Poes!" She was offended and thought herself deceived, asking "one who calls himself my friend. . . . Are there *two Ingrams* as well as two Poes?" Again Ingram made his peace with her, declaring himself, "Always, believe me, hero & *hereafter*, yours". But he had been given new evidence and had to make his mark.

With apparent malice, he sent her proofs of an article by him, "Unpublished Correspondence by Edgar Poe". These were the letters of Poe to Mrs Sarah Elmira Royster Shelton, whom Ingram called Poe's "first and last love". He deliberately shattered the fond illusion, which had made Mrs Whitman become his guide to the poet. He proved that she was no longer Poe's ultimate love.

In her deception and disillusion, she showed grace and courage. Just before her death, she reviewed Ingram's article in the *Providence Journal*. The piece began: "Moore was blamed for burning the biographical memoranda confided to him for publication. Some of Poe's later memorialists may perhaps be blamed for not burning unofficial confided to them for publication by Poe's nearest and dearest friends." The review then accused Ingram of breach of faith with her over the material which she had shown him. She ended by quoting Dr Johnson on Boswell, "Sir, if I thought that Hoppy were preparing to write my life, I should be tempted to anticipate him by taking his."

So *Poe's Helen Remembers* is more than an essential text for Poe scholars. It is a black comedy for biographers and for the witnesses of the dead, great and gone. It is a shame that a work of such meticulous scholarship from a press as distinguished as the University Press of Virginia should have scant out a review copy missing thirty pages with another section bound into its place. Such sloppiness from such a source is inexcusable and an affront to the editor, which Poe would certainly have turned into an affray.

Thomas Pynchon : The Art of Allusion by David Cowart (166 pp, Southern Illinois University Press, $10.95. 0 8093 0944 0) provides a systematic examination of the allusions made in Pynchon's novels to a wide range of interests. The book looks at specific works: "Paimings in *V.* and *The Crying of Lot 49*" and "Film in *Gravity's Rainbow*", and discusses general topics such as music, language and literature in Pynchon's work as a whole. An introductory chapter covers Pynchon's use of allusion and reference.

Heights of discrimination

By David Seed

NICOLA BRADBURY :
Henry James: The Later Novels
238pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £12.
0 19 812096 6

"Frankly, quite the best 'all round' of my productions", Thus, with characteristic authority, Henry James expressed his satisfaction with *The Ambassadors*, a satisfaction which, as his prefaces to the New York Edition suggest, extended to include his two other late works, *The Wings of the Dove* and *The Golden Bowl*. F. O. Matthiessen elevated James's own preference into a critical orthodoxy when he argued (in *Henry James, The Major Phase*) that these three works constitute his crowning achievement. Nicola Bradbury's new study follows in Matthiessen's footsteps by giving some attention to *The Portrait of a Lady* (an early masterpiece) and a nod towards the fiction of the 1890s but only as transitional and rather experimental work. A brief final chapter on *The Sense of the Past* and the *Ivory Tower* (both unfinished) confirms that the three late novels form a peak in James's career.

Taking his own criterion of maximum formal coherence, Bradbury concentrates on the different ways in which James holds the reader's attention ("interest") and the hermeneutic procedures employed by characters to arrive at meaning ("process"). Her method is to examine "key episodes from the three late novels in great detail —episodes such as Strether's visit to Gloriani's garden in *The Ambassadors*, or Milly Theale's quest-like religious experience in the Alps in *The Wings of the Dove*. Various formal elements are extrapolated like the use of framing devices, double perspective or recurring pairs of contrasting words. Bradbury is particularly interesting on Milly whom she reaches from saintly passivity, arguing that she has a surprisingly energetic imagination and thus she escapes being defined either by the naturalistic or romance settings in the novel. She reaches a surprisingly modernistic conclusion that "on every level of the image of the Dove simulacra attenuate, subverting the reader's expectations of formal stability". Equally interesting is a kind of extended apologia through emphasis on the totality of the works under discussion, to bring criticism back to the experience of reading. But her exclusive and ultimately formalistic criterion of perfection leads to a concentration which Bradbury makes on behalf of Maggie Verver who emerges as a reliable and authoritative figure in *The Golden Bowl*, partly because she demonstrates a more open and resilient capacity for analysis than does the Prince.

> Virtually every page of the central chapters of this study contains penetrating comment on shifts in pace, contrasts in perspective, and changes in diction. It is, for example, quite impressive to demonstrate that even an apparently unequivocal word like "also" can become charged with meaning in *The Golden Bowl*. In the chapters on this novel and *The Wings of the Dove* particularly, Bradbury preserves a clear sense of the continuity between episodes. Her main criterion of value is a successful interplay between the various formal elements which she identifies. In effect she projects an ideal reader who would take to heart James's advice on the daring writer: "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost", and, as Bradbury puts it, "our reading should . . . ideally cover every aspect of expression". Psychologically this is probably impossible. In critical terms it can lead to a disproportion between particular specific analysis and theoretical conclusion. The chapter on *The Ambassadors* is rather disappointing in this respect because pages of close scrutiny lead to a conclusion that all parts of the novel are organically interrelated. A second problem, and one which faces any one undertaking analysis on James's works, is how much attention to pay to earlier criticism. Bradbury steers a tactful middle course between ignoring it and swamping her text with acknowledgments. She synthesizes selectively and, since one of her main emphases is on language, draws on earlier work by Seymour Chatman, David Lodge and Ian Watt, among others. The enormous bulk of James criticism obviously raises an obstacle to making strong critical generalizations.
>
> There is a third limitation which is more basic. In 1944 Matthiessen had good polemical reasons for defending James's late style, since it helped to counter a pro-naturalistic bias in contemporary criticism of American fiction. Now, however, that battle has been more than won. The orthodoxy of the so-called "major phase" undervalues James's earlier works and elevates formal perfection as a prime criterion of value. More and more specialized studies of James accelerate this spiral into finer and finer discriminations. It is to Bradbury's credit that she is trying through synthesis and

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Along the production line

By Gamini Salgado

JOHN RIPLEY :
"Julius Caesar" on stage in England and America 1599-1973
370pp. Cambridge University Press. £17.50.
0 521 22781 X

"Professor Ripley" says the blurb "in this study of *Julius Caesar* offers one of the most detailed stage histories ever attempted." I am afraid it's all true and the reader who perseveres to the end is likely to learn more than he wishes about the subject. The book begins, predictably but unpromisingly, with a workmanlike though somewhat stodgy catalogue of critical opinion on the play, a line or two on each notable critic from Dennis to Dowden. It becomes clear that well into the nineteenth century, literary opinion and stage production of the play were governed by the notion of great individual moments, rather than of a coherent whole.

Where stage history is concerned, records are scanty for the seventeenth century but suggest that the play was popular and the text reasonably full and accurate, though there was some redistribution of speeches. The author has little difficulty in showing the such cuts as were made were either damaging or silly or both, as cuts often are. In the eighteenth century the play was seen as essentially a patriotic fable with a heroic Brutus pitted against a tyrant Caesar. Staging had a certain flexibility, mainly due to the use of scenic effects that were suggestive rather than massively representational in the nineteenth-century manner. There is unexpectedly little illumination to be derived from the accounts of various actors in this period. John Ripley has done a tolerable deal of ransacking but has no more than a few scanty crumbs to offer.

Things begin to brighten considerably when we reach the nineteenth century, to which the bulk of the study is devoted. There is ample verbal and visual documentation about the great nineteenth-century performers, though the ordinary interested reader may not always be familiar with Kemble, Young, Macready and Phelps each contributed decisively to the theatrical image of the play while Tree's spectacular production at the end of the century set the pattern which most London productions were to follow up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Professor Ripley gives a good account of Kemble's "heau ideal" style of heroic acting and distinguishes it from the vein of domestic tragedy which Macready infused into his productions; the latter's innovations in the Assassination and Crowd scenes are carefully noted.

The records of American production are understandably less full, though the play was popular with eighteenth-century American intellectuals for fairly obvious ideological reasons. Early nineteenth-century American actors almost without exception took Kemble as their model and the heroic-spectacular tradition survived into the 1930s until it was shattered by Orson Welles's memorable Mercury Theatre production in modern dress. This was the father of all those productions in which we are offered the conflict between Fascist totalitarianism and well-meaning but muddle-headed liberalism. Welles's ruthless cutting of lines, deletion of characters and general straitjacketing of the play into a rigid political preconception evidently yielded a brilliant clarity in production, but it marks the further limit of the "interpretation" of Shakespeare (at least for those who, like the present reviewer, consider Charles Marowitz's experiments to be well beyond the pale).

The author approaches his topic in terms of five principal areas of interest; text, staging, characterization, type of theatre and audience taste, though there is not a great deal about the last. His apparent determination to record every change, addition or omission however trivial, often without comment, does not make for easy reading. On the other hand, when we do stumble upon a comment it is often disappointingly banal. The author himself remarks at one point: "To attempt further comment upon these scenes would be to labour the obvious", a consideration which ought to have deterred him oftener.

In his accounts of staging Professor Ripley habitually falls into a style more suited to the recording of chess moves than to the demands of ordinary reading. Doubtless prolonged frequentation of prompt-books and their jargon is partly to blame for this. Though all abbreviations are carefully explained and there is even a helpful little diagram at the beginning of the book, the ordinary reader would probably have been grateful to have passages such as the following clearly spelt out:

> Brutus and Cassius now cross in conversation, to L." where they meet Popilius who is just entering. After speaking to Cassius he advances to the left of Caesar. Casca then moves to Cassius' right, and Decius to Casca's left. While Brutus calms Cassius' fears with "For look, he smiles", and Caesar doth not change" (III,i,24), Treb. & Ant. Xing in conver" up to LUE, and make a leisurely exit.

These are Macready's production notes which Professor Ripley intermittently quotes *verbatim*; and paradoxically the quotations from actual production notes tend to remove the reader from the actuality of the theatrical occasion instead of bringing him closer to it. Perhaps it is the somewhat desperate attempt to appeal to the specialist theatre historian as well as the ordinary playgoer which has distorted Professor Ripley's sense of scale and proportion and brought him, in the professed task of praising Caesar, perilously close to burying it under a rubble of trivia.

Most of the time, the author is content to record what actually took place on the stage and what contemporaries thought about it, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between his comments and those of eyewitnesses. But when some of his critical assumptions do come to the surface one wishes he had given some space to substantiating them instead of taking them for granted. Thus he assures us that "For Shakespeare, however, politics and the personal and moral life of man were inseparable and continuous; they may have been, but the point is certainly not self-evident. It seems truer to say that while such continuity may have been a Shakespearean ideal, what interested him as a dramatist were the conditions which made for discontinuity in the various spheres, and its consequences. Again, discussing Trevor Nunn's 1972 production of the play, Professor Ripley writes:

> Nunn reaffirmed that Shakespeare was a great believer in law and order and that the preservation of the social structure must in his view transcend all human aspirations. But that was hardly news.

Quite apart from the question whether Nunn's production merits any such univocal judgment, it is certainly news to me that Shakespeare believed in the overriding necessity of preserving the social structure. (I take it "his view" is Shakespeare's, not Nunn's.) The circumstances in which a given social structure becomes intolerably engaged Shakespeare's dramatic energies in different ways in such diverse plays as *Lear*, *Measure for Measure* and *Coriolanus* (to say nothing of *Julius Caesar* itself). Shakespeare was not, after all, the author of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* or *Certain Sermons ... or Homilies*, or even of the Chronicles of Hall and Holinshed.

At the end of his survey of 375 years of stage history, Professor Ripley arrives at the unexceptionable conclusion that *Julius Caesar* appears to best advantage when a full text is acted with simplicity, clarity and fluidity. In this it does not differ markedly from other Shakespearean plays (other plays generally?). More interestingly, he provides in an Afterword some notes for future directors. These, though offered with all the tentativeness and modesty appropriate to an academic study, are nevertheless incisive and central. They include the confirmation of such problems as the play's rhetorical style, its epic scales, the dramatic rhythm, generally stately and unhurried but with occasional moments of violent upheaval and ominous stillness, the change of emphasis after Caesar's death and the balance between the four major characters and between the three major scenes (the Assassination, the Forum and the Quarrel). Professor Ripley's observations on these points may seem obvious, but at least his study amply justifies the claim that no production on record has done justice to them all. In his own words "*Julius Caesar*'s stage history ... is a tale of unrealized potential".

Companies in competition

By Peter Holland

JUDITH MILHOUS :
Thomas Betterton and the Management of Lincoln's Inn Fields 1695-1708
287pp. Carbondale, Illinois : Southern Illinois University Press. $18.95.
0 8093 0906 8

Whenever Equity announces one of its more bizarre and misguided attempts to protect the interests of its members by keeping a foreign actor off the English stage, its awkward posturings make an effective reminder of the fundamental lack of power the actor has in the commercial organization of theatre and film. The ritualized comments about the gross overcrowding of the profession cannot hide the remarkably few attempts actors themselves have made recently to take over control of the theatre company and safeguard themselves against the twin evils of the overwhelming dominance of the stars and the crass intervention of theatrically insensitive administrators. There are, of course, honourable and intriguing exceptions, even outside the fringe theatre companies, where political ideology enforces a democratic company structure. The Actors Company, for instance, chose the play before choosing the director, and refused to allow any of its members star billing. Each actor agreed to take his parts in one show in return for major roles in the next and their generosity in casting themselves resulted in an extraordinary generosity in performance and strong and selfless ensemble playing. Yet there are only two significant occasions when the stars rebelled against bad management and created for themselves new and more egalitarian companies. The more recent revolt led to the establishment in 1919 of United Artists under the control of Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and D. W. Griffith in an attempt to give actors control over the production and distribution of films. The earlier rebellion in 1695, created a new theatre company at Lincoln's Inn Fields, starring the twelve actors led by Thomas Betterton, who had dominated the United Company, the only theatre company in London for the previous thirteen years.

When the actors drew up a list of their complaints in a petition to the Lord Chamberlain in 1694, their grumbles about salaries and perks disguised the true nature of the problem. Since the Restoration, whoever the nominal manager of the theatre company might have been, the actors were, in effect, responsible for the day-to-day running of the theatre. Betterton, in particular, had almost uninterruptedly managed the theatre since the death of Sir William Davenant in 1668. But the sudden appearance of Christopher Rich as theatre manager in the 1690s, as beneficiary of a number of shady business deals in the shares in the United Company, dislodged Betterton from his position of control and removed a whole series of rights and perks from the actors. Rich's notorious stinginess pushed the twelve most senior actors into their petition and, when the patentees' answer proved to be contemptuous and uncompromising, forced them into seeking a licence for the establishment of a new company.

In effect the conflict of company structures is a contrast between entrepreneurial capitalism and a workers' cooperative or, to put it into an earlier theatrical context, remarkably like the contrast between Henslowe's company, the Admiral's Men, and Shakespeare's, the Chamberlain's Men. Even though the rebellion left Rich without any major actors at all, he could call on sufficient finance to see him through the initial bad patch. The actor-rebels drew up a remarkably progressive sharing agreement with sickness benefits and pension rights, but their own status as stars and reluctance to recruit new talent inevitably caused their company's eventual collapse.

Yet it is not the history of dry financial arrangements that makes the competition of the two companies between 1695 and 1708 so significant for the later developments in English theatre. The desperate search to find more and more elaborate attractions to lure away their rival's audiences led both companies to dislodge the play from the centre of the evening's entertainment. For the first time an evening in the theatre was more like a variety show. The introduction of after-pieces—which were at least dramatic — competed with rope-dancing, performing monkeys, feats of strength, animal impersonations and a whole host of songs and other musical interruptions to the play itself. Alongside this goes the gradual and awkward change to an increasingly sentimental comedy, a modulation of audience taste which Rich was better able to capitalize on. The rebels were too inflexible to see the direction in which comedy was moving. The period also marks the introduction of Italian opera. When the two acting companies were reunited the union allowed for a separate company concerned solely with the performance of opera.

Judith Milhous offers a fat more complete account than has hitherto been available of the events leading up to the rebellion and of the subsequent competition. She demonstrates, often at inordinate length, the differing intensity of competition from the bitter acrimony of the first years to an accommodating acceptance later. Little of the evidence is new but some of it is re-interpreted. If new light is indeed shed on some of the minutiae of the period, then it is done at the cost of any broader reflection on the general origins and future influences of the rivalry. The extraordinarily narrow and restrictive focus allows for a detailed year-by-year account and, if only the evidence had run to it, no doubt she would have opted for a day-by-day account in preference. Thank goodness Betterton and Rich didn't consistently advertise in the newspapers.

But theatre history, as an area of study, is at its most valuable when it merges into dramatic history, when it can tell us about some of the reasons for changes in the form of drama written and performed. To do that, theatre history requires a sensitivity to the drama, a sharp critical ability to detect and detail change and an awareness that theatrical success and literary quality are not the same thing at all. Judith Milhous borrows her critical vocabulary largely from Robert Hume and she indulges in play after play until it fits the categories prescribed. Comedies are labelled as "hard", "humane" or "reform" with inverted commas intact. Thus the movement to clean up the theatres, led eventually by Collier, "produces a move toward 'humane' and even 'exemplary' drama, but the 'new' modes do not replace the 'old' drama overnight". The taxonomy is so insensitive that the experimentalism of Congreve's *The Double Dealer* is made indistinguishable from the deliberately traditionalist bias of his earlier play *The Old Batchelor*. Nothing indicates that Vanbrugh's genuinely humane study of marriage, *The Provok'd Wife*, is an infinitely better play than Durfey's *The Intrigues at Versailles*, even if both are "old-style wit comedy". Plays as significant as Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* and Congreve's *The Mourning Bride* are mentioned only insofar as they are successes when first performed, in fact the existence of plays is rarely accounted for by any other reason than the competition of the theatres as if dramatists are all hacks.

At its best, Judith Milhous's study is a fine example of the reconstruction of the finance and personnel of a theatre company; at its worst it has the critical insensitivity that gives theatre history a bad name.

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Fiction in brief

BARRY FANTONI :
Mike Dime
192pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £5.50.
0340 25350 9

Though written by a parodist from *Private Eye*, *Mike Dime* is by no means a parody. The writer reminds one more of those women who invoke the spirits of Chopin or Liszt, acting as their secretaries, accepting the dictation of the symphonies the great men were always meaning to write if only they hadn't died. Fantoni's guiding spirit is Raymond Chandler, but while the composers who are called up usually seem to be working way below par, such being the lethargy of heaven, Fantoni's Chandler is often brighter and better disciplined than the real Chandler was in the years just before his death.

Energetic evangelists all, Chandler enthusiasts tend to forget his lazy areas—the pages of dull and unnecessary dialogue, the illogical and frequently impenetrable plots—concentrating instead on his marvellous wisecracks and his ability to give the physical impression of a character in a couple of sentences. Fantoni's writing is never lazy, and his plot, though bizarre, never cheats.

Like the Chandler hero, with his jokes and metaphors and his fearsome facility about money, Fantoni's *Mike Dime* is a wry, self-aware loser surrounded by people in hot pursuit of money yet never quite able to clinch it for any time:

> Something was puzzling me. Frank Summers found himself with a case full of money that didn't belong to him. Nothing unusual in that: guys lose their cases every night of the week. On election day they usually lose a whole lot more. Paper clips, shoes, propelling pencils, wives, fortunes. One guy even loses the election. Fantoni places his detective in 1948 Philadelphia, while Chandler operated on the West Coast, but no noticeable difference of style or tone appears. The bars are just as dejected, the villains just as thuggish, the main female character just as remotely beautiful:

> Put together, she had the kind of rare, dark, voluptuous beauty that made men suddenly do silly things. It would make a bachelor buy a new hat and college boys take down their pin-ups. It would make married men leave their wives and unmarried men leave other men's wives. Once you let go you would be a cooked fish.

The book gradually reveals this young lady as more sinning than sinned against; at the same time, Dime becomes more pursued than pursuing.

There are intriguing aspects of the Dime character that one hopes will be expanded in Fantoni's inevitably begun) next Dime book, in particular his bewildered bonking of the World War he has recently left. On this evidence Fantoni could write successfully in whatever style he chose; perhaps one day, if he is brave enough to resist the sneers of his colleagues, he will attempt to discover his own.

Craig Brown

EVELYN WILDE MAYERSON :
Sanjo
274pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.
436 27440 X

Evelyn Wilde Mayerson is an American psychiatrist who teaches as well as practises psychiatry. *Sanjo* is her fourth book and first novel. It is about Sandra Joanne Bernatsky, "Sanjo", a thirty-four-year-old woman with Down's syndrome. Sanjo has an IQ of thirty. She lives with her elderly parents somewhere in suburban America.

Mayerson sets out to dispel various aspects of commonly held prejudices against disabled people. In return she offers some stereotypes of her own which, finally, prevent *Sanjo* from being a real success. One stereotype is a young neighbour, the mother of a little girl who plays with Sanjo. We know that she was vaguely rebellious in college and studied to become a social worker. Now a macramé expert, she is callous and insensitive to Sanjo and feels guilty about it in the language of this book, macramé plantholders are equated with liberal guilt).

Another neighbour, Mrs Cervitano, is presented with all the markings of an Italian matriarch, but no substance. She has four grown sons who, although all with families of their own, dote on their mother and compare their wives to her. Mrs Cervitano is constantly trying to feed everyone ravioli. She even has a moustache. So does her sister.

Mayerson manages to be more convincing about Sanjo, but not without some unwanted side effects. Descriptions tend to be clinical and pedantic, full of odd facts and statistics, and occasionally providing unintended comedy. We learn that "When Ma first became pregnant, she took the news hard". And of Sanjo's aunt: "Mickey at sixty-two was still pretty, although the nasolabial folds that lined her crafted nose were deeper than they might have been since the supporting cartilage had been whacked away." So much for nose jobs.

Possibly this is an effect of Mayerson having previously written only non-fiction. *Sanjo* reads like a textbook of clinical histories which has been disguised as a novel.

We also encounter psychobabble language presumably meant to popularize the subject matter at hand: "Penny's parents were into spacing, both personally and in a global sense." This refers to the fact that Penny is an only child.

The strong clinical viewpoint is not reserved only for Sanjo himself. Mayerson also casts a matter-of-fact eye on the small-minded middle-class America in which Sanjo lives. Her neighbourhood reads like a fact sheet of private lives and personal tragedies, or an inventory of slip-covered furniture, big cars and new clothes. It does not, however, possess much human interest.

Elissa Durwood

LYNN GUEST :
Children of Hachiman
310pp. The Bodley Head. £5.95.
0 370 30311 3

The Children of Hachiman is set in twelfth century Japan, where warring Samurai clans are engaged in a struggle to establish their rival dynasties. The two main clans are the Minamoto and the Taira. The book follows the fortunes of Yoshitsuné, the orphaned youngest son of Yoshimoto, chieftain of the Minamoto clan. The little boy, destined to become the leader of the clan, is placed in a monastery until the time is ripe for him to infiltrate the court. His father's old retainer, Masauchika, also known as Shomon the holy man, coaches the boy for his role as a great Samurai, presenting him with the Hachiman sword. Shomon has protected this magnificent sword for twelve years. As he unwraps it there is a reverent description:

> Suddenly chill steel flashed through the dusty crimson folds. The sword lay between them, gleaming in the lantern light . . . the blade—the blade was truly fit for a war god. As long as a man's arm and subtly curved, it was of the finest steel, perfectly welded to a tough iron core with a cutting edge tempered to razor sharpness. . . . The balance was perfect. He could feel the tense steel vibrating from the blade through the hilt to his hand. The sword seemed to become part of him, an extension of his being.

This is typical of the detailed description which Lynn Guest goes in for: kimonos rustle, swords glint, blood runs in rivulets and heads are sliced from shoulders and roll away into the mud. The author has lived in Japan and has obviously done a great deal of research—the book is based "on historical fact and heroic legend". But detail piled upon detail will not alone breathe life into a novel, and the characters are so one-dimensional—good, bad, wise, or foolish—that it is difficult to follow, let alone get excited about, the action which pucks this novel's pages.

Mary Furness

CONSTANTINE FITZGIBBON :
The Rat Report
184pp. Constable. £5.95.
0 09 463200 6

Simon Raven published in January a novel, *The Roses of Picardie*, in which the psychic power of rats was integral to the plot. Only half way through the year, Raven's contemporary Constantine FitzGibbon has had the same idea. Maybe rats are about to oust bored housewives, disillusioned writers and sharp-eyed children as a prime subject for novelists.

Judging by *The Rat Report*, it would be a pity if they did. It is scarcely a novel; more a bundle of prejudices, quirky theories and grandiose statements bound together in the flimsiest of ways by a flimsier yarn. The book can be divided in two. Half is a rat sending out reports to the world. These are fluently spoken and occasionally disarming perspectives on man, his increasing inertia, the poverty of his means of assimilation, his distrust of the unassimilable. The other half involves scientists deciphering, diplomats plotting and a love story of embarrassing banality about a girl with "golden hair".

It is remarkable that a writer of no less than thirty very varied books should allow himself such cliché. Much of the dialogue is awful: "'I shan't complain about your cooking when you're my wife.' 'Am I going to be your wife? You didn't tell me.' 'It must have slipped my memory.' A shame, because the rat's monologue, if understandably crankish, retains a vigour and punch.

C.B.

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APPLICANTS should be qualified professionally [illegible] Chartered Librarians. Salary [illegible] £4,971. Application forms and details from Borough Librarian, Arts Officer, Central Library, [illegible] Way, Romford, Essex RM1 3AR. Closing date: July 11, 1980.

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Details from the Librarian, School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU, to whom applications, with the names of two referees, should be made by Monday, July 14, 1980.

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